AUDACIOUS GADHAFI PLOT HAS CANADIAN CONNECTION

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NUTS ABOUT BALLET
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TWO MORE CHARGED IN STANLEY CUP RIOTS

{page 6}

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'Epic' Grey Cup footage lost

B.C. Lion upset over missing film ◐ Free helicopter ride offered to anyone who returns the missing SD cards

A friend of B.C. Lions linebacker James Yurichuk is distraught over a recent fumble.

On Monday, Yurichuk and friend Bradley Friesen — who happens to fly helicopters — flew to the top of a mountain and filmed the Canadian linebacker victoriously raising the Grey Cup above his head as the sun set behind him.

But in the celebrations that followed that night, Friesen lost the footage.

"Absolutely the stupidest thing I've ever done in my life," he said. "They must have fallen out of my pocket."

To commemorate Yurichuk's day with the cup, Friesen strapped cameras to the front and side of his Robinson R44 helicopter and flew 20 minutes into the mountains.

"I landed him on top of a 6,000-foot mountain peak and just got the most epic shots of him holding the cup over his head," Friesen said yesterday. "Nothing says B.C. like standing on top of a mountain peak with the Grey Cup."

Yurichuk, part of the 2011 B.C. Lions that won the CFL championship last week in Vancouver, said standing atop the mountain was one of the scariest things he'd ever done.

"If you slip up at the top there and something goes wrong, that's the end of it. But the risk was definitely worth it and it's something no one's ever done before with the Grey Cup."

The resulting video footage was better than either of them had envisioned, but when Friesen went to edit the footage Tuesday morning, he realized two of three 16-gigabyte blue SD cards were missing.

Friesen thinks he lost the cards on Monday night at one of a half-dozen downtown bars between 7 p.m. and 3 a.m.

The remaining footage was uploaded as a short film on YouTube, but Friesen said it pales in comparison to the missing clips.

"If there's anyway we can get it back, we'd like that to happen," Yurichuk said. "Brad's offered a free helicopter ride to anyone who returns it, so hopefully that gets it back."

Anyone who may have found the two SD cards can email greycupcards@gmail.com or tweet @bradleyfriesen. ● DANIEL PALMER

DANIEL PALMER/METRO

▶ B.C. Lions linebacker James Yurichuk poses with the Grey Cup Monday in front of his friend's helicopter.

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Remains of diver found 26 years later

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS
@METRONEWS.CA

A body recovered from the Burrard Inlet back in October has been identified as a scuba diver who went missing 26 years ago.

The remains of Peter Devoe, who was wearing a wetsuit and scuba gear, were found entangled in the nets of two commercial fishermen as they were pulling up their crab trap on Oct. 23 in the Burrard Inlet, just west of Cates Park.

Stephen Fonseca, manager of the B.C. Coroners Service Identification and disaster response unit, said the 29-year-old Devoe went missing during a dive on March 13, 1985.

"It's a difficult time for (the family) because they have to relive this," Fonseca said. "That's one of the realities of these kinds of cases because it brings up all of these experiences for the family, but I think this will allow them some resolution."

Devoe was a partial paraplegic, as he had suffered a severe injury prior to his diving experience.

"He was an athlete," Fonseca added. "He was very active and involved in paraplegic sports … and a well-liked individual in the community."

A medical cause of death couldn't be determined, but foul play has been ruled out.

JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Richard Rosenthal, the newly appointed chief of B.C.'s Independent Investigation Office, speaks during a news conference in Vancouver yesterday.

Former L.A. prosecutor named police watchdog

- Richard Rosenthal has set up similar offices in American cities
- Budget of province's new oversight office pegged at $10 million

MATT KIELTYKA
@METRONEWS.CA

A former Los Angeles prosecutor who set up civilian oversight agencies in Portland and Denver has been named the chief of British Columbia's new Independent Investigation Office (IIO).

Premier Christy Clark introduced Richard Rosenthal to media yesterday. He will be tasked with launching criminal investigations into police-related deaths and serious harm.

"It's fair to say I have high expectations," said Rosenthal, when asked about his reputation as someone who has been tough on police.

"The reality is this: I want the police to succeed and make sure they have the tools to do the job right. It's about the integrity of the process."

Rosenthal must now set up the IIO and hire staff before beginning work in mid-2012.

"We're eager to get this office operational," said Clark. "It's important for police to earn and maintain the trust of the public."

The IIO will have jurisdiction over both municipal police forces and the RCMP in B.C.

Rosenthal and his team of independent investigators will be allowed to investigate serious use-of-force incidents involving on and off duty officers and then recommend criminal charges if necessary.

Attorney General Shirley Bond said that the province's search for a civilian director quickly became international in scope and she's confident Rosenthal was the most experienced and qualified person for the job.

1 news

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COP COMPLAINT

Lack of penalty in police case being reviewed

The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner is reviewing a decision not to punish two Victoria police officers for the alleged use of excessive force last year.

The March 21, 2010, incident made headlines when a YouTube video of an arrest was posted to the Victoria police Facebook site.

In the video, the two officers appear to kick two suspects as they lie face down on the ground while being taken into custody.

On Nov. 29, 2011, New Westminster police chief Dave Jones — who was handed discipline authority by Victoria police chief Jamie Graham — found that the allegations of excessive force were not substantiated.

The decision, released yesterday, followed an independent review by Vancouver police and a Police Act investigation by the Calgary Police Service.

"It is clear that in considering the materials available within this incident and the evidence presented at the disciplinary proceedings that the burden of proof has not been met to the stand as required," wrote Jones.

But Police Complaint Commissioner Stan Lowe has announced his office will review Jones' decision.

He intends to decide by the end of January whether a public hearing into the incident should be called.

MATT KIELTYKA/WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fighting the cancer battle with the F-word

- Local charity empowers youth to join the fight against the disease
- Cheeky T-shirt launched 'something powerful,' says founder

CONTRIBUTED

▶ Partners in the cancer battle: Yael Cohen, right, and her mother Diane

KENDRA WONG
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

Yael Cohen is taking an aggressive stance against cancer.

She's fighting the killer with the F-word.

The F Cancer charity, founded by Cohen, empowers youth to teach their parents how to look for cancer instead of just finding it unexpectedly.

The two-year-old charity, which operates out of a modest office on Carrall Street, began with the creation of a T-shirt that said "F–k Cancer."

Cohen made it for her mother when she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009.

"I always knew we had something powerful when strangers would come up and hug her (when she was wearing the shirt)," said Cohen.

The T-shirt has turned into a social movement aimed at ending late-stage cancer diagnosis — mostly, the disease is curable if caught in Stage 1, Cohen stressed.

"Every kid thinks they know more than their parent — and, for the first time in history, they might."
YAEL COHEN

Youth are often left out of the conversation in the fight against cancer — and Cohen says that's a serious mistake. With F Cancer, she hopes to create a shift in traditional parent-child roles.

"All of the sudden, the traditional roles are reversed because of social media, and the knowledge and education we gain from it," she said.

By combining humour, wit, edge and social media, the charity aims to educate youth about the earliest warning signs of cancer so they can push their parents to get tested.

Christmas gifts go to pot

Santa and his reindeer won't be stopping in a Vancouver Island community to pick up two Christmas parcels addressed to Eastern Canada.

RCMP Sgt. Darrell Robertson says police stopped a known prohibited driver at a traffic stop in Oceanside and found the Christmas parcels containing marijuana.

He says they were destined for Eastern Canada, but certainly won't be going there.

A 56-year-old Parksville man already facing drug charges will be dealing with even more of the same when he goes to court on Jan. 25.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

▶ Police in protective gear during the June 15 riot in Vancouver.

More charges laid in cup-riot investigation

Two men are facing eight charges including participating in a riot and mischief over $5,000

KENDRA WONG
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

Two more people have been charged in the June 15 Stanley Cup riot, Vancouver's integrated riot investigation team announced yesterday.

"Once charges have been approved by Crown, we will be moving swiftly to see that suspected rioters are brought to court," said Insp. Les Yeo, the officer in charge of the riot investigation.

Nineteen-year-old John Sawicki from Surrey has been charged with participating in a riot, two counts of mischief over $5,000 and arson.

Ryan Dickinson, 20, from Coquitlam has been charged with participating in a riot, two counts of mischief over $5,000 and breach of undertaking.

Members from the VPD police fugitive task force have also been brought in to assist with the arrest of "hard-to-find individuals" who may be trying to evade charges.

Twenty-three of the first 27 people formally charged have either turned themselves in or been arrested, with the latest arrest yesterday morning.

"We won't be backing off this investigation and neither (has) the public," said Yeo in a press release.

He attributed the success of finding suspected rioters to the Riot Roundup poster campaign which launched last month.

Police continue to receive three to four tips a day from the public, he added.

NANAIMO

Man in wheelchair attacked

A wheelchair-bound male has been hospitalized after being assaulted and robbed by two men in Nanaimo.

The 61-year-old man wheeled himself out of his seniors-care facility in the 900 block of Hecate Street to have a cigarette. Minutes later, he was approached by two men. They demanded he give them his money, when he refused, the man was thrown from his chair and repeatedly kicked and punched. The two men took off on foot with the man's wallet and an undisclosed amount of cash. Anyone with information is asked to call Nanaimo RCMP.

KENDRA WONG

Body found in Burnaby identified

RCMP have identified a body found in the bushes off Fareham Avenue and Elwell Road to be 20-year-old Branson Kerick Rendell Sanders. Sanders' body was found by a person walking their dog on Friday.

An autopsy was conducted but further testing is required to determine the cause of death. KENDRA WONG

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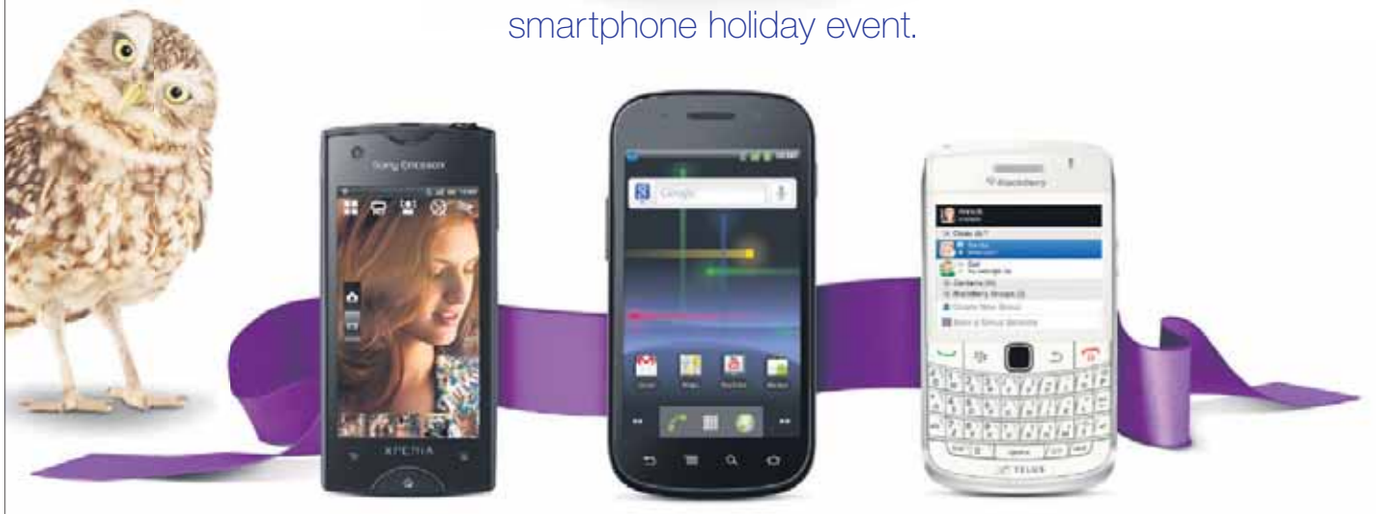

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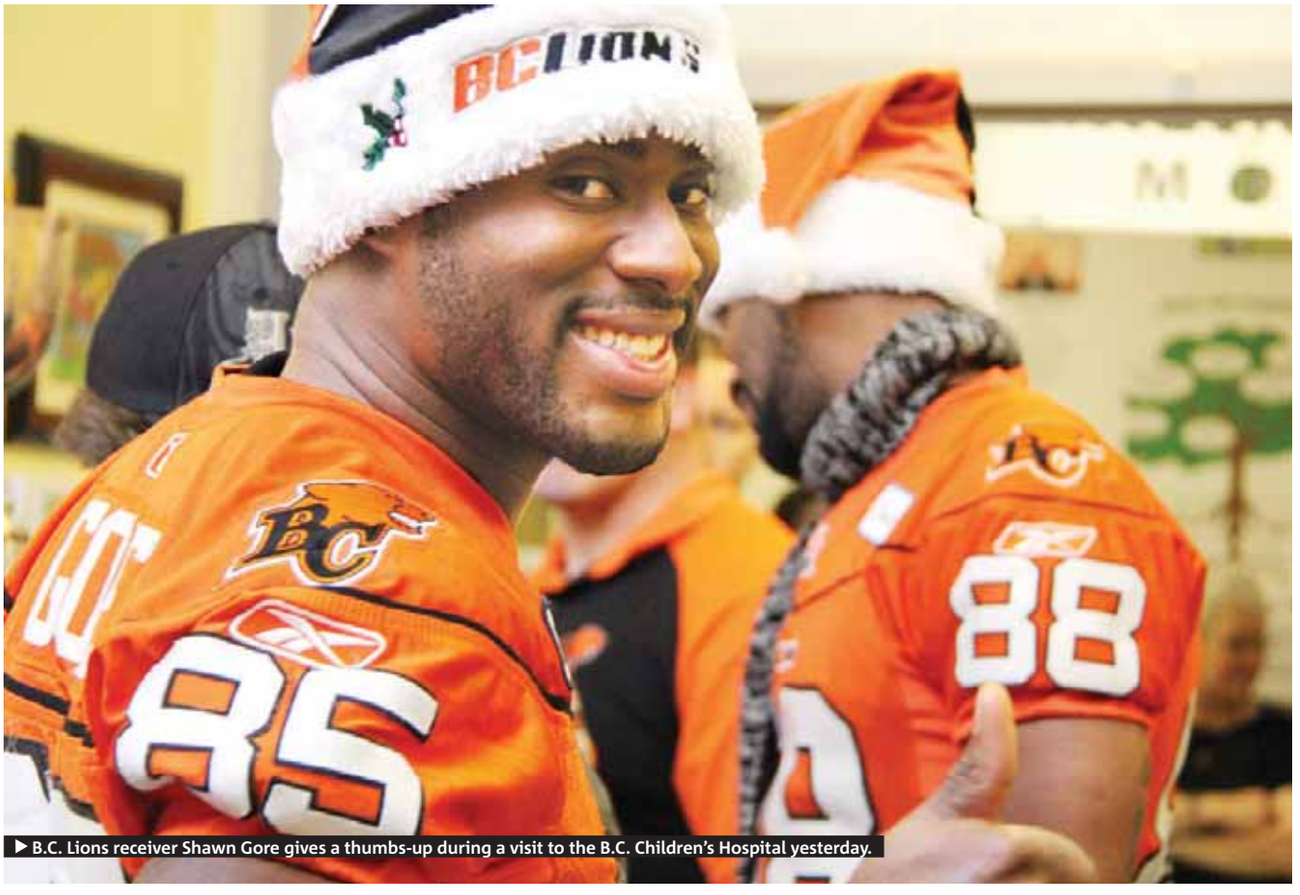
B.C. Lions spread some holiday cheer at B.C. Children's Hospital yesterday with the Grey Cup ◆ Leos happy to get one-on-one time with some young Lions fans ◆ Parents say their kids are energized by the players' special visit

TEXT AND PHOTOS: **PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS**



▶ B.C. Lions receiver Shawn Gore gives a thumbs-up during a visit to the B.C. Children's Hospital yesterday.

The Lion's share of Love

▶ Brynn Brandon, 11, says she wants to become a Felions cheerleader when she grows up.

▶ Austin Gallagher, 10, poses with Lions quarterback Travis Lulay and the Grey Cup.

▶ Leo makes 15-month-old Amelia Clarke smile yesterday as the B.C. Lions brought the Grey Cup to the B.C. Children's Hospital.

Young fans get a close glimpse of Grey Cup

Ewen Smith met his favourite B.C. Lions player in person for the first time.

The 15-year-old got a chance to see the Grey Cup and a few members of the winning team yesterday during their visit to the B.C. Children's Hospital.

"We just talked for a little bit," said Smith, who had his football signed by Travis Lulay. "It was pretty cool."

Ewen's mom, Heather, said these kinds of special visits energize her son, who is being treated for kidney failure at the hospital.

"It really makes a difference in how he feels about being here," she said. "It's so great of them to give their time to come here. They're busy, they have lives, it's getting close to Christmas — but for them to come here and see the (kids) was great."

Brynn Brandon, 11, was excited to see the Felions and even showed them she can do the splits.

"I want to be a cheerleader when I grow up," Brandon said. "I like doing gymnastics and I have lots of fun doing it."

Travis Lulay said it's great to be able to share their win with young Lions fans.

"Being able to bring the cup in here and see all the smiling faces is very special," he said.

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS

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James pleads guilty to sex abuse

Former junior hockey coach to be sentenced on Feb. 22 Ex-player Fleury says damage has been done

LARRY MACDOUGAL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

It was another dark moment in one of the blackest chapters in Canadian hockey.

Former junior coach and convicted sex offender Graham James pleaded guilty yesterday to sexual assaults involving two of his former players, including NHL star Theoren Fleury. A soft-spoken, emotionless James entered the plea in a Winnipeg courtroom via video link from Montreal.

The disgraced coach was originally facing nine charges of sexual assault involving three players between 1979 and 1994, but only pleaded guilty to charges involving Fleury and another victim, whose name remains under a court-ordered publication ban.

Charges related to a third complainant, Greg Gilhooly, were stayed.

At a news conference in Calgary, Fleury criticized the justice system for how it handled the James case.

"I believe what people show me — he showed me he was and is a rapist. There is no changing a monster like that."
THEOREN FLEURY, EX-NHL STAR

"Graham James pled guilty years ago, and then he was granted a pardon after he was found in Mexico and brought back to Canada on these charges," he said. "He was given bail.... This is what the mighty Canadian justice system allowed a previously convicted child rapist to do." **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

BILL BECKER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Graham James holds his award in Toronto on June 8, 1989, after being named The Hockey News man of the year.

Perimeter pact initiatives still years away

Key features of the Canada-U.S. perimeter-security pact — including a controversial new entry-exit system for crossing the 49th parallel — are three to four years from seeing the light of day.

The 29-point deal and an accord on regulatory reform aim to streamline trade while protecting the continent from terrorist attacks and other security threats by aligning approaches and screening more people and cargo before they arrive in North America.

"These agreements create a new, modern border for a new century," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said at a formal ceremony in Washington, alongside U.S. President Barack Obama.

"The key that locks the door to terrorists also opens a wider gate to cross-border trade and travel."

PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Prime Minister Stephen Harper and U.S. President Barack Obama hold a news conference following a meeting at the White House in Washington, D.C., yesterday.

But many of the initiatives will be years in the making.

Full implementation of the entry-exit control regime isn't expected until June 2014, the same year a new integrated cargo-screening strategy is expected to be fully online.

An improved means of sniffing for explosives in the luggage of U.S.-bound air travellers isn't due for completion until March 2015. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Contentious

- The most contentious feature could be the plan to exchange entry information of all persons at the Canada-U.S. border, which would serve as a record of exit from the other country.
- Critics of the perimeter-security initiative argue it puts Canadian sovereignty at risk.

FB's popular list is out

An obscure online acronym is among the more surprising topics popular with Canadian Facebook users in 2011.

Facebook's list of the year's most popular status updates was topped by LMS, which is short for "like my status." The acronym was followed by the late Jack Layton, the video game Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3, the death of Osama bin Laden and Charlie Sheen. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

SCHALK VAN ZUYDAM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Kent

'Kyoto, for Canada, is in the past': Kent

Canada's environment minister says the Kyoto Protocol is yesterday's climate deal.

"Kyoto, for Canada, is in the past," Peter Kent told delegates yesterday at United Nations climate talks in South Africa.

He urged countries to forget about Kyoto and focus on a series of agreements reached last year in Mexico.

"The Kyoto Protocol is not where the solution lies — it is an agreement that covers fewer than 30 per cent of global emissions," Kent said.

"It is an approach that does not lead to more comprehensive engagement of key parties who need to be actively part of a global agreement."
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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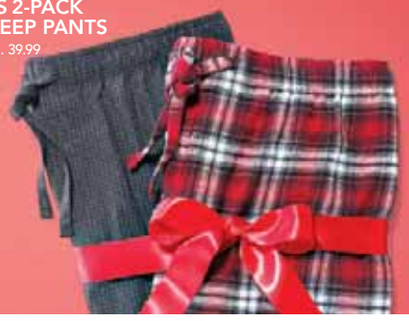

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Pearl Harbor group disbands

- Still 7,000 to 8,000 survivors
- But about 2,700 are in poor health

Veterans from Pearl Harbor observed the 70th anniversary of the attack yesterday with a solemn ceremony at the site of the Japanese bombing, as an aging and dwindling group of survivors announced it would disband at the end of the month.

"It was time. Some of the requirements became a burden," William Muehleib, president of the Pearl Harbors Survivors Association, said after the ceremony. He added that most of the survivors have realized there are other things they'd like to do at their age.

Survivors will be able to attend future commemoration ceremonies on their own. Local chapters of the group will function as long as they have members and survivors can gather socially, but they will no longer have a formal, national organization.

The group's announcement came as President Barack Obama hailed veterans of the bombing in a statement proclaiming yesterday as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

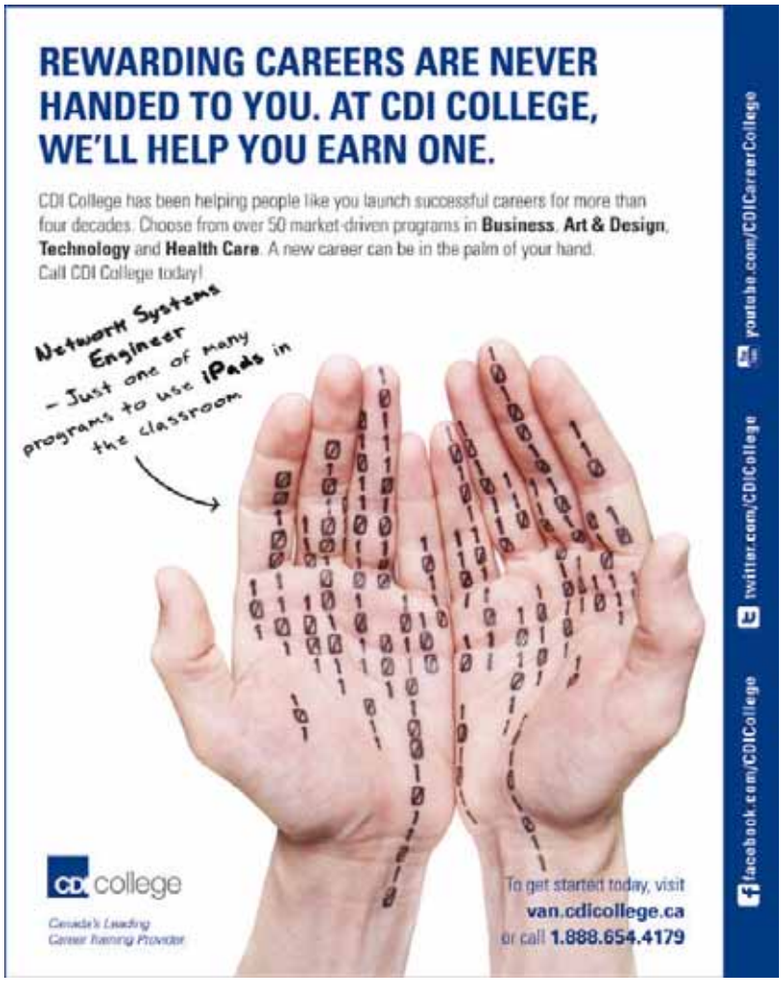
Historical Event

The Japanese attack on Dec. 7, 1941, killed 2,390 Americans and brought the United States into the Second World War.

About 3,000 people, including U.S. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus and military leaders, attended this year's anniversary at a site overlooking the sunken USS Arizona.

DAVID JOLES/THE STAR TRIBUNE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Second World War U.S. army veteran Quentin DeNio, 92, participates in a ceremony to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor yesterday at the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul, Minn. DeNio served in the Pacific and was awarded the Bronze Star for bravery.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News in brief

Man arrested for UK phone hacking

PRIVACY. British police said yesterday they have arrested another suspect in their investigation of phone hacking by the News of the World, the Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid shut down earlier this year.

The media identified the 41-year-old man as Glenn Mulcaire, a private investigator who was jailed for hacking into the voicemail messages of royal staff while working for the News of the World. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Arrests made in Italy's organic food fraud

FOOD. Italian police have seized 2,500 tonnes of grains, fruits and soy products that were falsely labelled as organic in a food-fraud ring that exported phoney organic products across Europe.

Italy's financial police in Vernoa said seven people were arrested Tuesday in the operation that uncovered the complicity of officials in several cities who were responsible for certifying food as organic.

Police said some of it remained in Italy, but products were also exported to the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, France, Belgium, Hungary, Austria and Switzerland. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

India rejects foreign retailers

BUSINESS. India yesterday suspended its plan to open its huge retail sector to foreign companies such as Walmart in a reversal seen as a major capitulation to political opponents that further weakens the administration.

The business community had hailed the initial decision just two weeks ago, and the government and some economists said foreign retailers would bring better prices for farmers and lower prices for consumers.

But opposition parties protested, saying the local mom-and-pop stores that are the heart of Indian retailing would be crushed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Morning-after pill won't hit shelves

In a surprise move with election-year implications, the Obama administration's top health official overruled her own drug regulators and stopped the Plan B morning-after pill from moving onto drugstore shelves next to the condoms.

The Food and Drug Administration was preparing to lift the age limit yesterday and allow younger teens, who today must get a prescription, to buy it without restriction. That would have made Plan B the nation's first over-the-counter emergency contraceptive. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

11

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius intervened with the FDA's proposal at the 11th hour, deciding that young girls, as young as 11 shouldn't be able to buy the pill on their own.

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Canuck accused in Gadhafi plot

Mexico says Ontario woman led plan to sneak in late dictator's son

An Ontario woman has been accused of leading an audacious plot to sneak a son of the late Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi and three relatives into Mexico.

The woman, Cynthia Vanier, is being held with three other suspects, said Mexico Interior Secretary Alejandro Poire.

The elaborate plan was to bring to Mexico al-Saadi Gadhafi — known for his love of professional soccer and his run-ins with police in Europe.

The plot was uncovered by Mexican intelligence agents in early September as al-Saadi was fleeing Libya shortly after his father's ouster. He never made it to Mexico, but did reach Niger, where he has been living.

The plotters allegedly jetted into Mexico, opened bank accounts and bought properties meant to be used as safe houses in several parts of the country, including one at a resort on Mexico's Pacific coast.

Cynthia Vanier "presumably was the person in charge of the finances of the operation."
INTERIOR SECRETARY ALEJANDRO POIRE

"The large economic resources which this criminal organization has, or had, allowed them to contract private flights," Poire told a news conference.

A Danish man allegedly served as "the logistic liaison" for the plan, Poire said.

Mexico made no mention of Moammar Gadhafi himself being involved in the plan. He was killed in Libya on Oct. 20.

The Foreign Affairs department confirmed Vanier's arrest.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAN PELED/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE

▶ As Libya erupted in revolt, al-Saadi Gadhafi fled to Niger, where he has been living.

The Vanier file

- Cynthia Vanier runs Vanier Consulting, a "practice dedicated to high-risk unconventional mediation work," says a resumé.
- Vanier worked with Attawapiskat First Nation in the fall of 2009, according to her website.
- Her resumé also cites work with various other aboriginal groups, including Caledonia's Six Nations of the Grand River from 2006 to 2007.
- She also says she assisted in the Ipperwash Provincial Park standoff in 1995.
- A woman who answered the telephone at Vanier Consulting in Mount Forest, Ont., would not give her name, and did not respond to requests for an interview. Another Vanier employee also declined to comment. Calls to Vanier's home were not returned.
- "I haven't heard anything about today's matters," said Vanier's Toronto-based attorney, Paul Copeland.

Governor gone bad gets 14 years in jail

A former Illinois governor was sentenced to 14 years in prison yesterday.

Minutes later, Rod Blagojevich's wife, Patti, stood up in court and fell into his arms.

He brushed tears off her cheek and then rubbed her shoulders.

Judge James Zagel said of Blagojevich: "When it is the governor who goes bad, the fabric of Illinois is torn and disfigured and not easily repaired."

Blagojevich was convicted of a wide range of corruption charges — including trying to sell U.S. President Barack Obama's vacated Senate seat to raise campaign cash or land a high-paying job.

Blagojevich, in a last plea for mercy, tried something he never had before: a heartfelt apology.

M. SPENCER GREEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Rod Blagojevich, with wife Patti by his side, speaks to reporters after being sentenced yesterday.

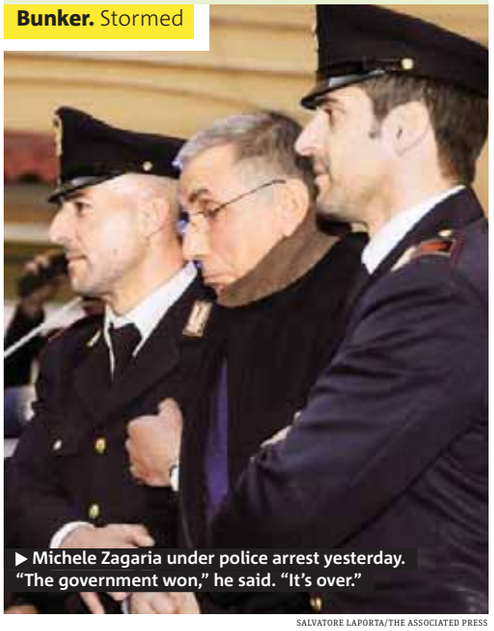
After years of insisting he was innocent, Blagojevich apologized again and again.

He told the judge he has made "terrible mistakes" and acknowledged that he broke the law.

"I was the governor and I should have known better and I am just so incredibly sorry," he said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bunker. Stormed



▶ Michele Zagaria under police arrest yesterday. "The government won," he said. "It's over."

SALVATORE LAPORTA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mobster pried from lair

Police yesterday captured Michele Zagaria, one of Italy's most-wanted mobsters. On the run since 1995, he was found in an underground bunker in his home province of Caserta. Police had located the bunker some time ago and were digging around it. Zagaria watched their progress on closed-circuit TV. He gave up without a fight.

MacKay may sue MPs over heli-fuss

Defence Minister Peter MacKay, pictured, is considering legal action against MPs who accused him of lying about a ride he took aboard a search-and-rescue helicopter.

MPs have called on MacKay to apologize and even to resign over his use of military resources to shuttle him to the airport in Gander, N.L., from a vacation at a remote fishing lodge.

Documents showed some National Defence staff predicted the trip could be perceived badly, with one suggesting the pickup was only to be under the "guise" of a search-and-rescue exercise.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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China police crack child-trafficking rings

Chinese police arrested 608 suspects and rescued 178 children in busts of two separate child-trafficking networks, authorities said yesterday.

The Ministry of Public Security said prosecutors were preparing cases against the suspects, suggesting charges have yet to be filed.

Its statement posted online said 5,000 police across 10 provinces co-operated for six months on the investigation and moved in to arrest the suspects last week.

Child trafficking is a big problem in China, where traditional preference for male heirs and a strict one-child policy has driven a thriving market in baby boys, who fetch a considerably higher price than girls. Girls and women also are abducted and used as labourers or as brides for unwed sons.

Tens of thousands of children go missing every year, though the exact numbers of victims are difficult to obtain.

The rescued children will be put into orphanages while authorities try to reunite them with their families, the ministry said. It didn't give the age range of the abducted children or other specifics.

State broadcaster CCTV aired footage showing female police officers cradling babies in their arms. The footage also showed more than a dozen suspects handcuffed and escorted by officers, or lined up outside a building in Fujian province. Families who bought trafficked children would be forbidden from keeping them, a ministry official told CCTV.

The statement said police have rescued 18,518 children and 34,813 women since it started a human-trafficking campaign in 2009.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

7,000
gangs or rings that sold women or children were cracked by the police since it started a special campaign against human trafficking in April 2009.

Syrian president denies fault

In interview, he laughs off question about whether he feels guilt for the deaths of 4,000 Syrians

Syrian President Bashar Assad said in a rare interview broadcast yesterday that he never ordered the brutal suppression of the uprising in his country and insisted only a "crazy person" would kill his own people.

"I did my best to protect the people," he told ABC's Barbara Walters during an interview at the presidential palace in the Syrian capital, Damascus. "You feel sorry for the life that has been lost, but you don't feel guilty when you don't kill people."

Assad, who commands Syria's armed forces, has sealed off the country to most outsiders while clinging to the allegation that the uprising is the work of foreign extremists, not true reform-seekers aiming to open the authoritarian political system.

"No government in the world (kills) its people unless it is led by a crazy person."
BASHAR ASSAD, SYRIAN PRESIDENT

The United Nations and others dismiss that entirely, blaming the regime for widespread killings, rape and torture. Witnesses and activists inside Syria describe brutal repression, with government forces firing on unarmed protesters and conducting terrifying house raids in which families are dragged from their homes in the night.

"They're not my forces," Assad responded when asked if Syrian troops had cracked down too hard on protesters. "They are military forces (who) belong to the government. I don't own them."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROB WALLACE/ABC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Syrian President Bashar Assad poses with ABC News Anchor Barbara Walters for an interview, which aired yesterday. Assad denied he ordered the deadly crackdown on a nearly-nine-month-old uprising in his country, claiming he is not in charge of the troops behind the assault.

Assad's defence weak: Expert

Murhaf Jouejati, a Syria expert at George Washington University, said Assad's interview was both "defiant and delusional."

"He is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces," Jouejati said. "To say that the security forces do not have orders to kill or to brutalize the people — that it's maybe the mistake of some bad apples — is not a response."

But he said stonewalling was not a surprise, given the regime's actions in the past. "If he is not responsible, then we don't know what he is doing in the presidency." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kenya's doctors demand change

Hundreds of doctors from public medical facilities marched through the Kenyan capital on Wednesday to demand a larger stock of drugs in their hospitals, better equipment and better pay.

The doctors were on the third day of a countrywide strike. Teaching staff have been drafted to work at the hospitals to help fill the gap.

The doctors said they wanted more drugs and equipment, a national plan to improve health care in Kenya, and higher wages.

The starting wage for doctors in Kenya is about $400 a month. In contrast, members of parliament make around $11,000 a month — some of the highest wages for legislators in the world.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police killer evades death

Prosecutors on Wednesday abandoned their 30-year pursuit of the execution of convicted police killer Mumia Abu-Jamal, the former Black Panther whose claim that he was the victim of a racist legal system made him an international cause celebre.

Abu-Jamal, 58, will instead spend the rest of his life in prison. His writings and radio broadcasts from death row had put him at the centre of an international debate over capital punishment.

Flanked by Officer Daniel Faulkner's widow, Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams announced his decision two days short of the 30th anniversary of the white policeman's killing.

He said continuing to seek the death penalty could lead to "an unknowable number of years" of appeals, and that some witnesses have died or are unavailable after nearly three decades. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS.

Brazilian bicycle killer suspect arrested

Brazilian police say they have arrested a man suspected in the shooting deaths of eight men over the past two months.

Police inspector Eduardo Queiroz tells the Globo TV network that 22-year-old Ronis de Oliveira Bastos used his blue bicycle in at least half of the killings.

He says Bastos was arrested Monday on the outskirts of Sao Paulo while riding the bicycle and armed with a .38 calibre revolver.

He says the victims were men between the ages of 20 and 50.

Queiroz said Wednesday that Bastos claimed he used the gun for self-defence because he had received death threats.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

▶ Firefighters battle a wildfire near Smithville, Texas, in September.

Record year for disasters

- A dozen U.S. events each caused more than $1B damage
- Includes wildfires, droughts, snowstorms

America's wild weather year has set another record: a dozen billion-dollar catastrophes.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said yesterday that it has recalculated the number of weather disasters passing the billion-dollar mark, with two new ones, pushing 2011's total to 12. The two costly additions are the Texas, New Mexico and Arizona wildfires and the mid-June tornadoes and severe weather.

NOAA uses $1 billion as a benchmark for the worst weather disasters.

Extreme weather in the U.S. this year has killed more than 1,000 people, according to National Weather Service Director Jack Hayes. The dozen billion-dollar disasters alone add up to $52 billion in damage. Hayes, a meteorologist since 1970, said he has never seen a year for extreme weather like this.

Catastrophic

This year's total of a dozen billion-dollar calamities matches the number for all of the 1980s, even when the older figures are adjusted for inflation.

But this isn't just about numbers and records, it's about people, said NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco in an email. "Each of these events is a huge disaster for victims," Lubchenco said. "They are an unprecedented challenge for the nation." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Solar cheaper than we think: Research

Queen's prof estimates that the clean energy can be had on the global market for less than $1 per watt

A Queen's University professor says the public is being kept in the dark about the viability of solar energy.

Joshua Pearce of the Kingston, Ont., university's department of mechanical and materials engineering says many analysts project a higher cost for solar energy.

But Pearce says they aren't considering recent technological advancements and price reductions.

Pearce says he believes solar systems are near the "tipping point" where they can produce energy for about the same price of other traditional sources of energy.

Pearce makes the comments in releasing a study co-written by students published in the December edition of Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews.

Pearce has created a calculator program available for download online that can be used to determine the true costs of solar energy.

Analysts look at many variables to determine the cost of solar systems for consumers, including installation and maintenance costs, finance charges, the system's life expectancy and the amount of electricity it generates.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market moment

PRICES AS OF 5 P.M. YESTERDAY

TSX	Dollar
+ 67.48 (12,148.73)	- 0.07¢ (98.98¢ US)
Oil	**Natural gas**
- 79¢ US ($100.49 US)	$3.421 US (- 6.6¢)
	Gold
	$1,734.50 US (+ $13 US)

Apple. Store

▶ Apple employees gather at the entrance to the new Grand Central Terminal store in New York during a media preview yesterday.

MARK LENNIHAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A big Apple in the Big Apple

One of the world's largest Apple stores is opening at the landmark 140-year-old Grand Central Terminal train station in New York City. The 23,000-square-foot outlet will open its doors to the public on Friday.

RIM forced to change BBX name

Research In Motion is being forced to change the name of its new BBX smartphone operating system after the company lost a trademark ruling in the United States.

The name change marks another setback for the Waterloo, Ont.-based tech company, which has been hyping the new system for months.

A U.S. court ruled that the name BBX has already been trademarked by a software company in New Mexico.

RIM said on its Twitter account that "BlackBerry 10" will be the official name of the next-generation platform that will power future BlackBerry smartphones.

RIM is expected to release a new generation of BlackBerrys early in 2012 that run on the new operating system.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT

Netflix CEO predicts rebound

To hear Netflix CEO Reed Hastings tell it, the bone-headed decisions that have dragged down the Internet's leading video subscription service during the past five months eventually will be forgotten like a bad movie made by a great film director.

Shaking off the stigma of a massive flop won't be easy, a challenge Hastings acknowledged yesterday when he spoke at a UBS investor conference in New York. After his host mentioned the mystique surrounding Hastings as Netflix's fortunes soared a year ago, Hastings quipped: "Now, it's just pity."

The self-deprecating humour prefaced a 45-minute treatise on why Hastings believes Netflix will overcome its recent adversity and remain at the forefront of a shift that increasingly will turn watching Internet-distributed video into one of the world's most popular pastimes.

His long-term vision calls for Netflix to be selling Internet video subscriptions at prices starting at $8 per month in most markets outside of China.

"If you fundamentally believe Internet video will change the world in 20 years, we are the leading player on that basis," Hastings boasted. He quickly added a caveat: "As long as we don't shoot ourselves in the foot anymore."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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HOW TO HOST AN OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY

HE SAYS ...

JOHN MAZEROLLE
METRO

As one of Canada's top 605 columnists, I'm often asked advice on how to throw the perfect office Christmas party.

To me, the key has always been to think about fun and merry-making, so that you can avoid those things whenever possible.

You don't want to get sued, do you?

As most holiday partygoers know, parties have changed over the years from alcohol-fuelled blowouts where you might see Barb the secretary drink Kahlua from a shoe, to glorified potlucks where the wildest thing is the Worst Christmas Sweater contest.

Nowadays everyone seems scared, rightly or not, that they'll get sued if a partygoer drinks too much and goes all Darwin Awards on them. We, as hosts, fear our own guests' stupidity. (Eventually a drunk driver will sue the descendants of Sir Isaac Newton, whose famous forebear was reckless enough to have discovered the laws of motion, which have caused us all so much harm.)

My usual advice for the Christmas-party problem is to take extra precautions: serve alcohol, but only responsibly; get everyone to sign waivers (make sure the pencils aren't too sharp!); and place written warnings throughout the party explaining the possible danger represented by each item, including co-workers.

But this year I'm advocating something different, mostly because I want to see how it works out. This year, you should throw a party so wild that everyone will either forget what happened or be too embarrassed to bring it up, let alone sue.

John's unethical office-party tips:

• Start by picking a party theme. Tequila or Rum are two good ideas to get you started.

• Don't be concerned with unnecessary party frivolities, such as food.

• Spike everything, including the non-alcoholic beer. It's Christmas.

• As guests arrive, tell them it's a "social mixer" and seat them in unusual pairings — for example, your co-worker's husband with the blond intern, or Ms. Phillips in finance with the mail boy. Playfully point out the mistletoe over each spot.

• Provide a gift bag that includes a game of Twister, several lampshades and a pair of Santa-themed underpants.

• For the coup de disgrace, supply everyone with disposable cameras.

• As people are stumbling out the door, provide them with "door prizes" containing a perfume- or cologne-stained handkerchief, a napkin with a phone number on it and a strand of blond hair.

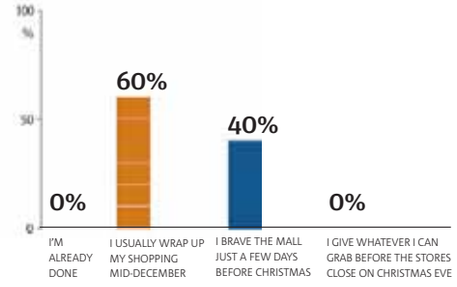
If all goes well (how could it not?), everyone will have the time of their life and never speak of it again.

Oh, and if something horrible and/or tragic happens because of my idea, then remember your legal recourse. Sue Isaac Newton.

Read more of John Mazerolle's columns at metronews.ca/hesays

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

How early do you finish Christmas shopping?



Local tweets

@ThatKevin Smith: VANCOUVER! This time tomorrow night, me & @JayMewes will have tuckered you out: tickets.voguetheatre.com/Online/seatSelŠ GET OLD CANADA: smodcast.com

@CalliCatBC1: Sweet shout-outs by @JayNolly to @aftncanada @86forever @Southsiders & all #WhitecapsFC fans while on @TEAM1040 this afternoon. Class act.

@ncollinet: Another gorgeous day in #vancouver Its so nice Living in 1 of the few major cities in North America that don't feel like a concrete jungle

@meaghanoreece: its a beautiful day in the neighbourhood #Vancouver

@edlau: You my boy, Booth! Hope David Booth's MRI results today are good. He was just starting to put it together. @D_Booth7 #Canucks

@sportsnetmurph: Still no word from AV on Booth's knee. Should know by the time we touch down in MTL RT @Canuckfan44: peaking of any word on Booth?

Birthday treats for polar bear

KINGUSSIE, SCOTLAND. Is Walker the polar bear planning The Great Escape? Probably not, as he seems quite content after celebrating his third birthday at Highland Wildlife Park in the Scottish Highlands. After playing with his new toy — a workman's hard hat — he ate an ice birthday cake, full of fish, fruit and vegetables.

METRO WORLD NEWS

370 kilograms is Walker's current weight. He is small now; the average polar bear can weigh over 600 kilograms.

He still waits for a special one

MATING. Walker may have to play with that hard hat a little longer after his date with a mate has been delayed. Zookeepers had brought in a potential female mate but she turned out to be already pregnant. Walker once had a female companion, but she had to be put down in April due to ill health. METRO WORLD NEWS

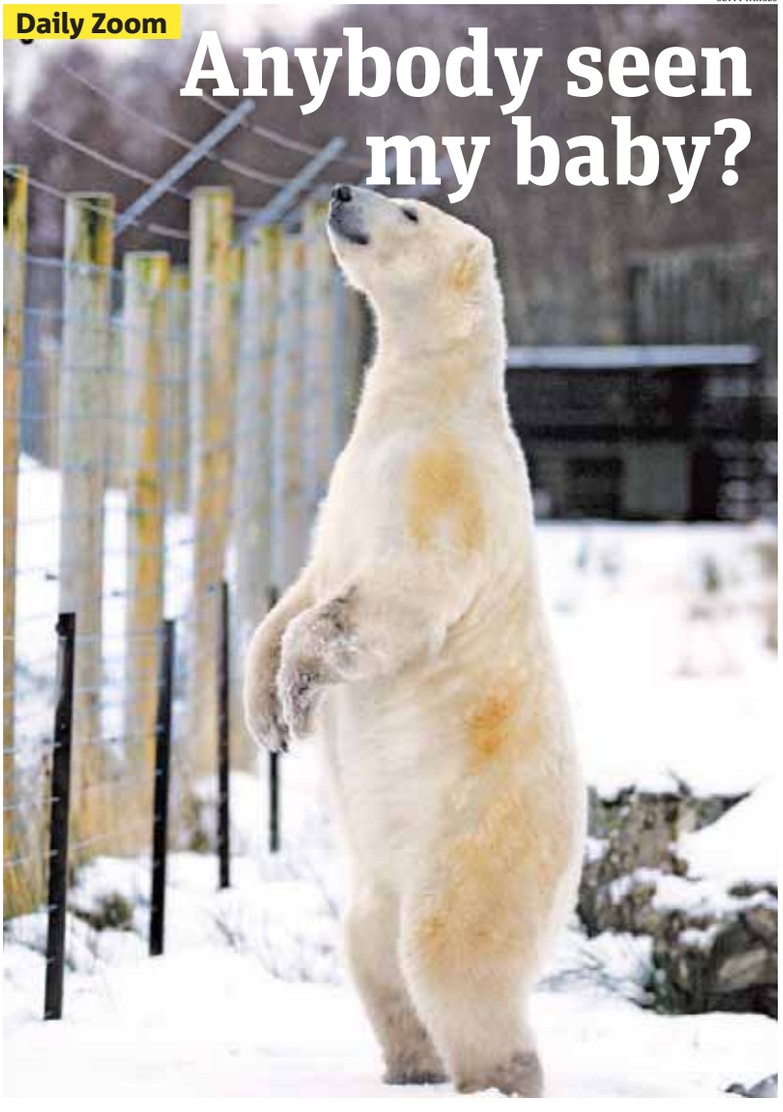
"Young bears are very inquisitive, especially Walker."

UNA RICHARDSON, ZOOKEEPER AT HIGHLAND WILDLIFE PARK

Daily Zoom

GETTY IMAGES

Anybody seen my baby?



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Goh see the Nutcracker

Goh Ballet's famed production of the holiday classic returns with something for everyone

BACKSTAGE PASS

GRAEME MCRANOR
METRO VANCOUVER

Anyone who knows me will tell you I enjoy a good ballet. Of course, for me, that can mean a pair of dancers pirouetting across a stage or a pair of pugilists punching it out in a ring.

Hey, I love the arts.

This week's column, however, previews an actual ballet.

A pretty good one too, if local pundits are to be believed. (I haven't seen it yet, so I'm forced to defer to Bill Murray's title character in The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou: "It was in the paper. I assumed they checked their facts.")

▶ The Goh Ballet's Nutcracker returns for a third season.

The Nutcracker

The Goh Ballet's acclaimed production of the holiday classic returns for its third year.

And according to executive producer Chan Hon Goh, director of the Goh Ballet Youth Company, it doesn't matter if you're a newbie or a seasoned ballet veteran, this one's got something for everyone: award-winning dancers, gymnasts, ballroom couples, an illusionist, and live music performed by members of the Vancouver Opera Orchestra.

Also, guest artists from American Ballet Theatre, who'll share the stage with more than 200 local dancers.

"All of this provides an unforgettable live performance experience that has truly become Vancouver's own holiday tradition," she says.

The Nutcracker opens Dec. 15 and runs for six performances until Dec. 18 at the Centre in Vancouver for Performing Arts.

Tickets range from $28 - $78 (plus taxes and service charges) and can be purchased at Ticketmaster.

For more information visit gohnutcracker.com.

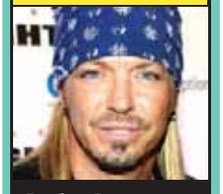
Sting

Tickets, get your tickets here.

▶ **Back to bass** A while back I wrote in this very space that Sting was performing in Vancouver in December. And, judging by the name of the tour, Back to Bass, there's a good chance he'll be playing some kind of bass guitar. Or maybe he's turning his back on it or just likes to fish. But, hey, time flies! And he'll be doing one of those things tonight, tomorrow and Saturday night. Tickets are still available on Ticketmaster.com and through re-sellers.

2 scene

Parade



Rocker Bret Michaels and Grammy-winning singer Cyndi Lauper are among the celebrities heading to New Orleans for Carnival 2012. Orpheus parade organizers named the pair as their celebrity monarchs yesterday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cannonball misfires for "MythBusters" TV show, rips through California house and minivan

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Big night, less than great expectations

The cast of New Year's Eve shares their lacklustre memories of evenings filled with Auld Lang Syne

RICHARD CROUSE
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

The cast of the new Garry Marshall film, New Year's Eve, had a great time making the movie, but haven't always had the best time on December 31st.

Josh Duhamel says the key to enjoying the night is keeping "expectations low" and leaving by 10:30 p.m.

Hector Elonzo, who has appeared in all 17 of Marshall's films, agrees.

"Expectations low, definitely," he says. "I did have one lousy New Years, because I expected something from it." He tells a story about being a musician "in the days of rocks and caves, before they knew the world was round."

His jazz quartet scored a show — "New Year's Eve was the big gig," he says, "that's when you made $50!" — to discover the audience didn't go for their New York brand of cool jazz. "They were like an oil painting looking at us. That was a big let down for us"

"When I stopped wanting my New Year's Eve to be perfect is when it started working out right," chimes in Hillary Swank, who plays the producer of the Times Square New Year's Eve show in the all-star film. "When I was young I was always looking for the best party to ring in the New Year, and I always ended up in a car saying, (sadly) 'Happy New Year.'"

"I got to kiss the girl I really liked, and then she turned around and kissed seven other people," says director Garry Marshall. "Not a good night."

But not all his end of the year experiences have been bad. In the early '60s he met his wife Barbara at a New Year's Eve party, and the two are still married. In fact she has a cameo in the movie playing a nurse.

Abigail Breslin may have an Oscar nomination under her belt, but that doesn't mean she can do whatever she wants on New Years.

"My parents are cool," says the 15-year-old actress, "they let me do things." But would they let her behave like her on-screen character and go to the biggest New Year's party on earth?

"I was saying the other day in an interview, 'I'm not really sure my mom would let me do New Year's Eve in Times Square.'

And she was like, 'You're right. I wouldn't.' So I don't think that's going to be happening any time soon."

HANDOUT

▶ New Year's Eve star Abigail Breslin admits in real life her mom would never let her venture out on her own to Times Square on Dec. 31.

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From a writer of "The Office"...

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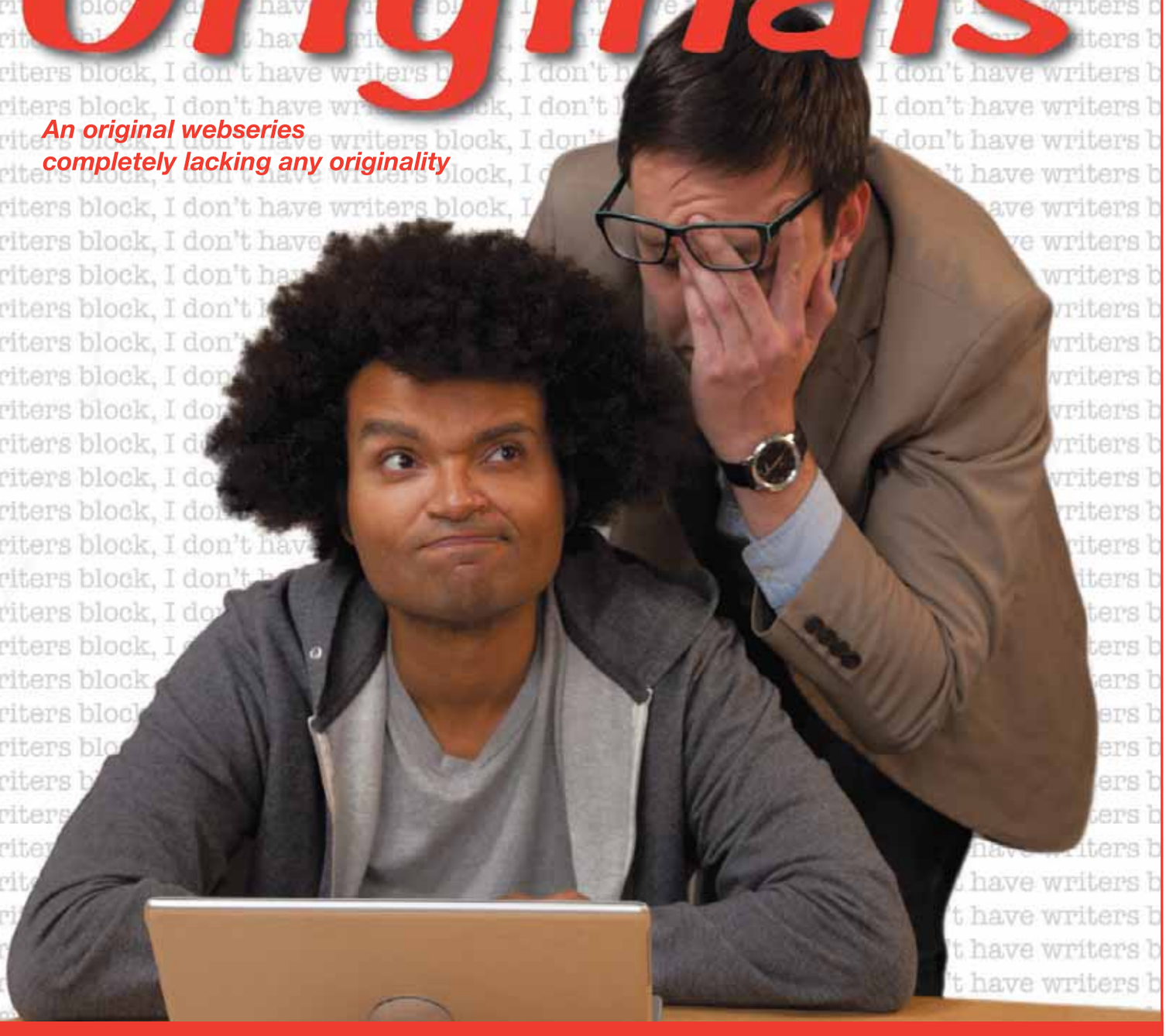

In today's episode... "The Meeting"

Bryce faces the hard truth that he may, possibly, have a hint of writer's block. Ok he has a massive case of writer's block. But not to be humbled, Bryce is about to discover that a pretty girl and changing one small habit can be inspiring.

New episodes post every Tuesday and Thursday. Watch at www.facebook.com/OriginalsTheSeries

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12. RE-GIFT a present to the less fortunate.

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A book all about me

Memoirs are increasingly popular with readers

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Neil Young is one of a number of celebrities who have memoirs slated to come out in 2012.

With a staggering list of celebrities and average Joes expected to put their lives to paper in 2012, it's clear the memoir craze shows no signs of waning. Neil Young, Pete Townshend, Carole King, Courtney Love, Rod Stewart and Gregg Allman are just a few of the would-be authors readying their stories for publication.

Publishing experts say the genre remains immensely popular because memoirs are easy to market and appeal to frazzled readers seeking to make sense of their lives. "I think people nowadays are assailed on all fronts," says Penguin's Diane Turbide, who edited Toronto author Marina Nemat's harrowing memoir The Prisoner of Tehran, a recent selection for CBC's Canada Reads.

"They're busy, they're overwhelmed by the pace of life, by information. They can't make out the shape ... of their own life. I think people are looking for some kind of narrative thread, some kind of plot that makes sense that doesn't feel so formless."

Sam Hiyate, president of literary agency the Rights Factory, has a theory as to why such books do well. Memoirs, he says, are easier to market than novels, because they have a hook that can drive media coverage. "Twenty years ago if somebody had some kind of confessional story about all the good and bad in their lives and the secrets, it might have been scandalous but it might not have been all that interesting to people," he says.

"But what happened with somebody like Oprah ... is that people would come and start telling you these stories and they were gripping because they were telling you secrets ... it became part of popular culture."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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No sleep until Cleveland

Beastie Boys, Guns N' Roses and Chili Peppers are among the latest to be inducted into 2012 Rock Hall class

HANDOUT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ The Beastie Boys are nominated for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Welcome to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Guns N' Roses.

The seminal rock band of the late 1980s and early '90s, best known for hits like Welcome to the Jungle, Sweet Child O' Mine and November Rain, leads the 2012 class of inductees announced on Wednesday. Also making the cut is the hip-hop trio Beastie Boys; rockers the Red Hot Chili Peppers; the late singer/songwriter Laura Nyro; Donovan; and influential British rock group The Small Faces/The Faces, which included Rod Stewart and Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood.

Nyro, who wrote such hits the 5th Dimension's Wedding Bell Blues and Blood Sweat & Tears' When I Die, is the only female act to make it this time around. The hall passed on Donna Summer, Joan Jett and the Blackhearts, Heart and Rufus with Chaka Khan, who were on the ballot for 2012. But it wasn't just women who were denied entry into the rock hall for next year. Voters also passed on hip-hop pioneers Eric B. & Rakim, War, the Cure and the Spinners.

Cleveland

Where and when it will take place.

▶ **The ceremony** The Rock and Roll Hall of fame induction ceremony will be held in Cleveland, where the rock hall is based, on April 14.

Guns N' Roses blazed on the rock scene in 1987 with their official debut, Appetite for Destruction. Fronted by siren-voiced singer Axl Rose, with Slash and Izzy Stradlin on guitars, Duff McKagan on bass and Steven Adler on drums, the group dominated music with its aggressive rock grooves. Early in their career they were criticized for lyrics in the song One in a Million deemed as homophobic, misogynistic and racist. They were also defined by their dysfunction, gleefully embodying the mantra of sex, drugs and rock and roll.

The band sold millions and millions of albums, providing a sharp contrast to a pop world defined by the likes of Madonna and Michael Jackson.

But the group's turmoil, often on display before the whole world, would cause the core to fall apart by 1996. Their induction should lead to talk once again of a possible reunion, at least for the induction ceremony.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Take a look into The Eye of the Storm

Director Schepisi talks about his love of working with great actresses

STEVE GOW
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

GREGORY READ

▶ Charlotte Rampling

After 30 years in show business, Australian filmmaker Fred Schepisi has discovered at least one thing making his latest movie The Eye of the Storm — he really loves working with actresses.

"It's true," admits the director who's helmed films starring the likes of Meryl Streep and Michelle Pfeiffer.

"I like how they see the world and where they come from and I never try to impose my male thinking on them at all. I ask a lot of questions and get them to present what it really should be."

Perhaps his proficiency with the female character is no clearer than in The Eye of the Storm, a touching dysfunctional drama that stars award-winning thespian Charlotte Rampling as a self-consumed dying matriarch that reunites with her inheritance-hungry adult children.

"If anybody's had somebody die in their family, they actually have trouble talking after the film because they want to express all the feelings that suddenly come up about that subject and can't because it's just churning around inside them," said Schepisi about the film's unexpected reception. "I'm not trying to put people off the movie because it's a pretty funny movie but it engages you in a way you don't expect."

Not only does the festival favourite boast a stunning cast that also includes Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush and two-time nominee Judy Davis, but The Eye of the Storm is especially close to Schepisi, who had to overcome directing his own daughter in a sex scene with Rush.

"If you look carefully, you'll see Geoffrey is very careful," laughed Schepisi. "He's aware that the girl's father is standing right there watching them, which actually worked perfectly…that kind of unease is very good for the scene."

Hollywood not black and white

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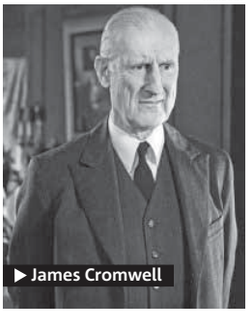

▶ James Cromwell

A breathless reverence creeps into veteran actor James Cromwell's voice when he discusses The Artist, his silent film from French director Michel Hazanavicius that's earning rave reviews from festival audiences around the world — and generating Oscar buzz. But when it comes to his work on 24 he's far less affectionate — and he doesn't mince words.

This is a very unique project. What was your initial reaction to it?

I don't particularly like homage films if they throw it in your face. I like it if it's as subtly done as it is here — I think it's very subtle and beautifully referential.

You had some displeasure working on the series 24. Could you go into that a bit?

I had never seen the show before, and I took it because my agent said it was important to do, that it would be a good thing. They paid me a lot of money to do it. And then I've taken my son captive and I'm torturing him, then I was going to take my grandson captive and threaten him. So I went to the producers and I said, 'Look, are there any redeeming qualities to this character?' They looked at me as though I was nuts, I was asking something bizarre … It could've been a great contribution, but they didn't have the imagination for that.

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Patricia Cornwell just getting started

Author has strong affinity with fictional heroine of her book series ◗ Red Mist released this week

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA
METRO WORLD NEWS IN NEW YORK

Red Mist might be the 19th novel in the best-selling Kay Scarpetta series, but author Patricia Cornwell isn't tired of her forensic examiner heroine.

In fact, 20 years since Scarpetta made her debut in 1990's Postmortem and the series went on to become an international sensation, Cornwell says she's just getting started.

"I am still quite passionate about her," Cornwell says with a twang, revealing her Southern roots.

"I'm having more fun with her now than ever, and I hope (my fans) don't get bored with them because I'm not bored with them."

Cornwell speaks about her characters almost as though they are real people, a charming tendency that occurred throughout our interview.

And it's understandable — you'd be hard-pressed to find an author who is closer to her main character than Cornwell is to Scarpetta.

"I look at the world through her and, when I write, I filter my personality through her," says Cornwell.

When asked what percentage of herself manifests in Scarpetta, she wouldn't name a figure, just saying: "I created this character and if she had a disposition that I found objectionable, I would not want to spend decades of my life with that person."

Another way Cornwell and Scarpetta are intertwined? The 55-year-old author is especially known for trying out activities that Scarpetta undertakes in her books — from scuba diving to flying helicopters to riding motorcycles.

"I do things enough so I can make you believe it enough when I'm recreating them for you. I want you to feel like you are in Savannah, Georgia," says Cornwell about the setting for Red Mist.

"And, actually, when a scene is going really well for me, I always have a flicker of a start when I leave my Boston office and there isn't moss outside on the trees."

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Patricia Cornwell

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Sex and sensibility

Two Broke Girls has a sweet core surrounded by stereotypes and sex jokes

PHOTOS: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ In Two Broke Girls, two down-on-their-luck waitresses are struggling to make an extra buck.

Two Broke Girls co-creator Michael Patrick King says he has no plans to alter his hit sitcom to placate critics who say it perpetuates racial stereotypes.

"I'm not going to change. No, absolutely not," King said in a recent interview from his Hollywood office. "I believe that anybody, when you see them for the first time, you judge them based on the surface."

Two Broke Girls — starring Kat Dennings and Beth Behrs as down-on-their-luck waitresses trying to make an extra buck — has become one of the fall TV season's few breakout hits.

The CBS show has an old-school feel and a big heart — at its core is the odd-couple friendship between street-smart Max (Dennings) and high-strung heiress-turned-pauper Caroline (Behrs).

"When we started out our joke was that we were going to sell it as Laverne & Shirley on crack," says King, an executive producer on Sex and the City.

"I felt that there was something missing (from TV), which was an old-fashioned sitcom for a young sensibility. And so I decided that it would be really fun to try to do two really funny girls, because I LOVE funny women."

While the comic chemistry between Dennings and Behrs has received consistent kudos, some critics have taken issue with the show's supporting players, including Oleg (Jonathan Kite) a lascivious Russian fry cook, bumbling Korean diner owner Han (Matthew Moy), and Earl (Garrett Morris), the restaurant's "jive-talking" African-American host.

King seems at a loss to explain why there's been so much chatter about those characters: "It's current, it's something to talk about. It's maybe a little in your face, I don't know," he says.

He notes that archetypes are commonplace in writing and says the show is reflective of his experience in the Big Apple.

"Anyone who's ever lived in New York has walked through an enormous melting pot of people. So for me, to do a show where you're not exploring race would be absurd in Brooklyn, N.Y.," he says, adding that the supporting characters will become more fleshed out as 2 Broke Girls progresses.

While 2 Broke Girls has an undeniable sweetness at its core, some critics have also taken umbrage with the crude sex jokes peppered throughout each 30-minute episode. King says such vulgarity is simply a reflection of reality.

"I think that it's important that two 23-year-old girl characters have a sensibility that actual 23-year-olds girls have in the world today," he says.

"I don't know how old the critics are, but all I know is the world of 23-year-olds is a lot more, let's say ... verbally vital ... than it was when these critics were 23 years old."

"We have a real audience, so I know if this stuff is funny. ... I think people of all ages enjoy a well-crafted, slightly naughty joke."

Watch it

- A new episode of 2 Broke Girls is set to air Dec. 12, followed by a repeat episode. Air times are: 8 p.m. ET (OMNI2); 7 p.m. PT on Citytv, 8 p.m. MT on Citytv, 6 p.m. CT on Citytv.

He's adamant, however, that the spirit of the show is what he ultimately loves about 2 Broke Girls.

"This show, without those two girls and their dreams, would not be a show I'd want to do, so it's really a combination of the sweetness and the sauciness and the old-fashioned contemporary stories that we're telling."

King won't reveal what's next for Max and Caroline, who are trying to improve their situation by starting a cupcake business.

And even though he's always believed in the show, he's still struck by the way viewers have embraced it.

"I'm always surprised in show businesses when something goes the way you want it to.

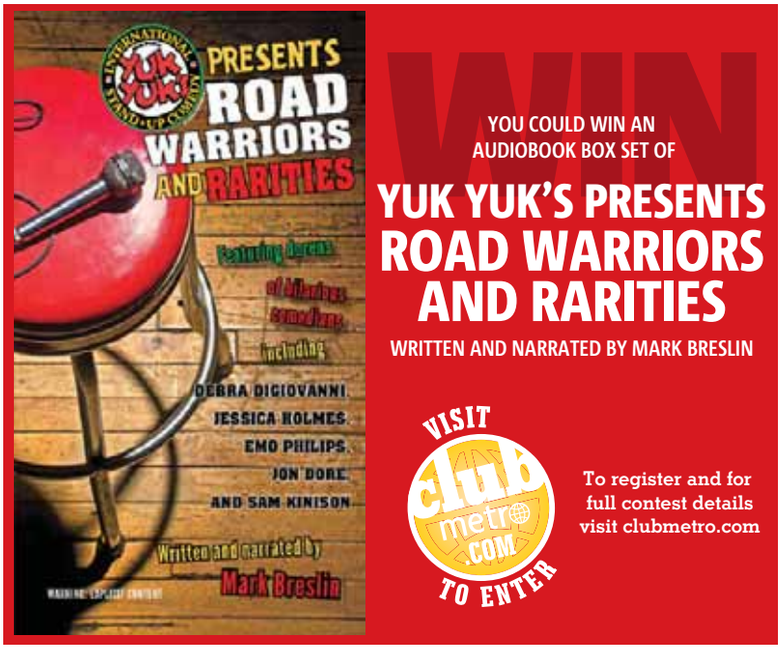
"It doesn't really usually have anything to do with quality as much as it is, sort of, the wind of where everybody is — what they're feeling. I don't know, there's something about the current economy, there's something about the state of the world."

"It's an interesting combination of familiar and shocking, the comedy in the show that .... it focuses (people's) attention on this like it's a little bit of an event on Monday night."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hot show, cool climate

Frozen Planet takes a closeup look at the Earth's polar regions



DISCOVERY CHANNEL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Polar Bears are one of many arctic animals threatened by climate change.

Discovery Channel's documentary series Frozen Planet will premiere March 18, and will encompass seven episodes including a program on climate change hosted by David Attenborough.

On that seventh episode, the famed British naturalist will investigate what rising temperatures will mean for the planet and life on it.

"You see sequences that have never been captured on film before"

DISCOVERY AND TLC NETWORKS HEAD EILEEN O'NEILL

Frozen Planet is described as "the ultimate portrait of our Earth's polar regions." A co-production of Discovery Channel and BBC, it was four years in the making and comes from the team behind Planet Earth, the acclaimed series that aired on Discovery in 2007.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

▶ Demi Moore

Today in awkward divorce stories

THE WORD

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

All of those A-list celebs going through divorces? Things are getting awwwkward!

First up in cringe-worthy separation stories: While Demi Moore was having dinner with a friend at a private club in West Hollywood recently, she couldn't help noticing soon-to-be ex-husband Ashton Kutcher dining nearby.

"She approached his table," a sources tells Us Weekly. "He gave her a hug, and they spoke for a few minutes." The source describes the couple's chat as "polite" but "very awkward."

At least it wasn't as bad as what went down recently with Jennifer Lopez and her soon-to-be-ex-husband Marc Anthony.

Anthony apparently refused to shoot his Latin reality TV show Q'Viva with Lopez because of her new relationship with 24-year-old backup dancer Casper Smart. A source told Star magazine: "Marc and J.Lo had a tense conference call when she was in Morocco. Inevitably, their discussion boiled down to her new boyfriend (Smart) and Marc made the decision not to work with Jennifer last week as a result."

Call me crazy, but maybe everything can be described as "tense" when you decide to work with someone you are going through a contentious divorce with.

Celebrity tweets

@WhitneyCummings
The more tape you use to wrap a present the crazier you are

@kathygriffin

Since I'm nominated 4 a GRAMMY 4 my comedy album "50 & NOT pregnant" don't u think my GRAMMY date should b @JustinBieber??

@eddieizzard

I've now run barefoot for 6 days in a row. Feet are complaining and getting stronger at the same time

@thomaslennon

"she's got legs and knows how to use them" is not that great of a compliment.

Baldwin doesn't fly the friendly skies

Alec Baldwin claims he was kicked off an American Airlines flight for playing the Scrabble-like game Words with Friends on his phone.

"Flight attendant on American reamed me out (for) playing (Words with Friends) while we sat at the gate, not moving," the actor posted to Twitter.

Baldwin was eventually removed from the plane and forced to take another flight, though his rep laughs off the situation.

"He loves Words with Friends so much that he was willing to leave a plane for it," spokesman Matthew Hitzik says.

But some sources say it wasn't as simple as all that. Other passengers claim Baldwin was also talking on the phone, and he reportedly became "violent and aggressive" toward the airline staff, according to Hollyscoop. METRO

▶ Alec Baldwin

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3 life

Gift picks

For the colleague

Thanks to things like Secret Santa, you can often find yourself in a position where you have to buy a gift for someone you don't know all that well. TankBooks's series of literary classics redesigned as iconic cigarette packaging is a good solution because it combines universally appealing reading (Ernest Hemingway, Rudyard Kipling and Leo Tolstoy, for instance) with cool design.
tankmagazine.com

MWN

Indian elegance in tweed and silk at spectacular Chanel show worthy of a Maharaja

Host with the most...style

The garland is hung, the chestnuts are roasting, the turkey's in the oven But what to wear?

One more thing to add to the to-do list for your holiday party: Find an outfit that creates a celebratory mood, is welcoming and warm (but not hot), can hide a little sauce splatter and has pockets to stash remotes, phones and, for the ladies, lip gloss.

It's the delicate balance of being chic and comfortable.

"I can't imagine any more pressure when you're putting on a party — when you are so focused on wine and food — and you have to look beautiful as well," says Simon Kneen, creative director of Banana Republic.

"Men have it a little easier, but you still have to make it look effortless and easy to manage."

Dressing for the role of host is a little bit different from a guest, with many more practical considerations. Just like every other aspect of the party, seasoned, stylish party-throwers say you'll likely want to do as much preplanning as you can.

Even last month, Kneen knew what he'd be wearing next time he entertained: a poplin shirt, sleeves rolled, with a tie. Meanwhile, Manhattan-based designer Shoshanna Gruss will pull one of her many cocktail dresses out of her closet and pair it with a chunky necklace or sparkly cuff bracelet.

"I have some fun statement pieces that I don't get to wear often," she says. "You're setting the rules so you know you'll be appropriate.

It would be a letdown, she adds, for guests who have put thought into their outfits to find the hosts in something they'd wear any other night.

"It feels funny to put on a dress and high heels at home, when you know you're not leaving, but it sets the tone," Gruss says. "Your guests will appreciate it."

Minnie Mortimer says she likes to emerge from her bedroom all dressed up, especially now that she lives in more casual Los Angeles after growing up in New York and Palm Beach, Fla.

This year, Mortimer will jazz up her look with a glittery hair pin. "I really like the holidays to be about a little bit of sparkle. It's hard to do the rest of the time or it looks too much, but during the holidays, it looks appropriate," she says.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARK & BOND/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Tyler Thoreson, head of Gilt Groupe's menswear editorial and creative divisions, likes a deep-red, fine-wale pair of cords for men. "It's an injection of holiday without going overboard," he says.

▶ Banana Republic

▶ Shoshanna

▶ Shoshanna

Festive face

- Makeup should be maintenance-free, says Ricky Wilson, Dior Beauty's celebrity makeup artist.
- "You have to keep in mind that you have many people looking at you with little or no time to look at yourself."
- His picks include false eyelashes or at least waterproof mascara, and liquid eyeliner.

Jeanne Space

In this hectic modern world, Twitter has become a cool and succinct way of communicating. It allows me to be accessible, instantly speak my mind, and connects me with all kinds of people. Whether it's a fashion question, or you just want to comment on life's bigger picture, I'd love to hear from you.

@Jeanne_Beker:
If you could wear only 3 pieces of jewelry, what would they be?

- **@WhoIsArlette:** A cocktail ring, chandelier earrings and a brooch
- **@ShamilaJiwa:** A set of harem stacking rings, classic honey comb earrings, and a small diamond talisman. Or a Labradorite Boa. Timeless!
- **@margotaustin:** Easy: wedding band, engagement ring, diamond earrings -- chic, simple and all gifts from my husband. #truelove
- **@KarleighSergio** My gold heart locket from Birks, my "dream" necklace, and my moms engagement ring that she handed downtome when I turned 16.

▶ @Jeanne_Beker: Working on the future of EDIT, for fashion jewelry yet to come! Stay tuned. Exciting things ahead!

TUNE INTO FASHION TELEVISION EVERY SUNDAY AT 5:30 P.M. (ET) ON CTV. JEANNE BEKER'S FINDING MYSELF IN FASHION (PENGUIN) IS AVAILABLE IN BOOKSTORES NATIONWIDE.

If you're sixty and you know it read these trends

THE KIT

It's easy to look and feel your best no matter what your age. Here we compiled some of the best products out there for ladies in their 60s. Go ahead and enchance your natural beauty!

AFTER HOURS

Bedtime is best for rich skin cream, because its consistency won't interfere with make-up. L'Oréal Paris Age Perfect Hydra-Nutrition Golden Balm Night for dry skin is enhanced with nourishing oils and has a luscious melting texture. $30, lorealparis.ca

EYE DRAMA

Choose a palette with matte and satin options. Guerlain Écrin 4 Couleurs long-lasting eyeshadows has both, plus soft iridescent and subtle metallic shades for strategic highlighting. $64, guerlain.com

TAKE A BROW

Brows were full at Jill Stuart, Prada and Alexander Wang; they're a must for defining the face. Urban Decay Urban Brow Precision Tip Brow Tint has a super-fine brush tip and the perfect water-resistant shade for blondes. (Shown: Blonde.) $24, urbandecay.com

CRANK THE VOLUME

Boost lifeless locks with Hair: Sally Hershberger Plump Up Thickening Mist for normal to thin hair, $13, hoppersdrugmart.ca

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Christmas colognes

CHANEL JERSEY

Jersey takes both its name and inspiration from Coco Chanel's controversial jersey collection of the Twenties. The pairing of jersey with lavender may read like a laundry powder but notes of musk and tonka bean give their latest scent a warm kick.
75 ml, $110, chanel.com

CZECH & SPEAKE VÉTIVER VERT

Vetiver belongs to men – not literally but in the fragrance sense. To rejuvenate this 'old timer' Czech & Speake have added green woody notes and citrus. That means you won't be emanating the same smell as every other chap on the street. **100ml, $118, czechandspeake.com**

NASAMATTO HINDU GRASS

The press release says it's meant to create "a warm affection for humanity." Oddly, you'll find no clues about the ingredients – this goes against the perfumer's concept. But we'd bet on wild grasses and patchouli.
30 ml, $165,averyfineperfumes.com

Get a leg up with beautiful boots

Cover up your gams in some glammed-up galoshes

There's fall and spring, winter and summer — and there's boot season. For many fashion fans, that's the best time of year.

Chances are you've broken out the cowboy boots and jeans, riding boots and leggings and maybe your best black work trousers and those cute high-heel booties you bought last year.

They're all easy, almost no-fail pairings. Finding the right skirt to go with boots, however, is more likely to trip you up, especially this particular season when it seems anything goes with hemlines.

Do long skirts get tall shafts or shorter ones? What's the rule on miniskirts? And can functional weather-friendly boots meet a fashion-forward midiskirt somewhere on the middle of the calf?

Stuart Weitzman

"Boots can do it better than almost anything when it comes to pulling your look together, but it also can cut you up," says celebrity stylist Cristina Ehrlich.

She adds: "You have to put your outfit on. If your eye goes straight for the foot, then something isn't right. You want a full 'look."

Since proportion matters, she suggests every outfit get the mirror test because what works for one skirt might not for the next, even if they're similar styles.

It's all about lines. You don't really want the top of the boot to meet the hemline; it could be longer or shorter — and filled in, when needed, with opaque tights, says Jen Ford, fashion news director at Lucky magazine.

Ehrlich, a style spokeswoman for Via Spiga, says the most foolproof boot choice is a to-the-knee shaft and a wedge heel, probably in black suede. But, she adds, you'd be surprised how easy it is to incorporate a dark purple, bottle green or grey suede into an existing wardrobe, even one rooted in black.

With a five- or 7.5-centimetre heel, there's really not an outfit you can't wear with these boots. She'd put them on in September and not take them off until April — and that's travelling to different places and climates.

"With the wedge, you get comfort and gain a few inches. You can dress it up or dress it down," Ehrlich explains. "It's chic and cool."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Idea + Ikea = ideal for guests

Karl Lohnes on how a budget guest room can make for a 5-star hotel comfort with a trip to Ikea

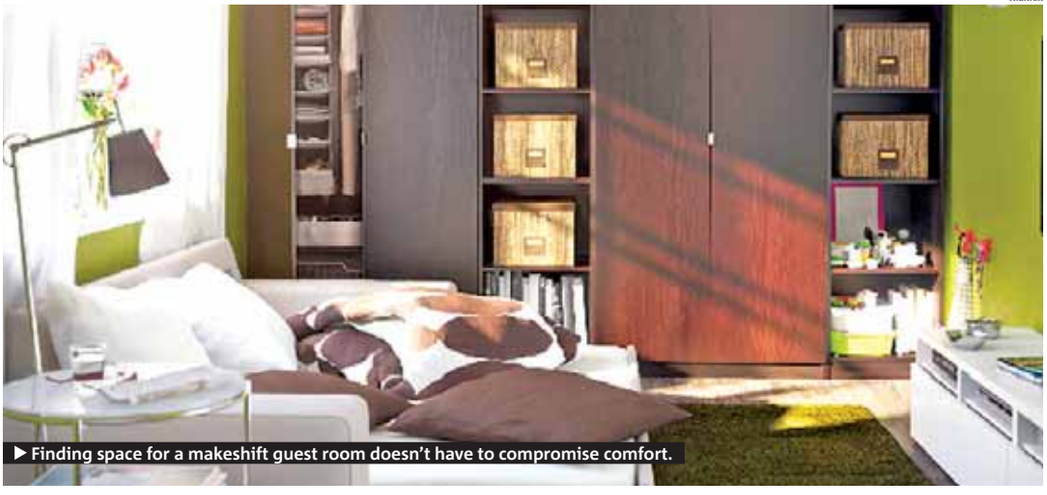
DESIGN CENTRE

KARL LOHNES
HOME@METRONEWS.CA

It's that time of the year when our spare bedrooms, couches and even our floors welcome guests visiting for the holidays.

Here are a few easy ways to comfortably welcome friends and family without spending all your holiday budget.

IKEA.CA



▶ Finding space for a makeshift guest room doesn't have to compromise comfort.

Spoil your guests

A few simple tips to help you be a hostess with the mostess.

- **Don't alarm:** Ask your guest about preferred wake up and breakfast times.
- **Token gesture:** Have some extra tokens for out of town visitors so they can run shopping errands as needed.
- **Mini-magic:** Add some holiday charm to their personal space with a mini holiday tree on the nightstand.
- **Small details:** A scented candle by the bathtub adds instant relaxation.

IKEA

▶ An over-the-door hook rack keeping things organized for guests. Grundtal Hanger, $9.99, Ikea.

Provide thoughtful supplies

Installing a guest account on your home computer, extra toiletries, bottles of water, room spray, extra hangers, an alarm clock, a humidifyer and over-the-door hooks for extra hanging storage are all welcomed by guests.

Offer spa treatment

IKEA

Carry tote baskets keep toiletries organized and shared bathrooms free of clutter. Nansum Basket, $24.99, Ikea

You might only have one bathroom in your place so how do you make it feel as personal for yourself as guests? Try to strip all your personal belongings on display and keep them in a carry caddy in your bedroom. Supply your guests with a similar caddy (filled with toothpaste and shampoo). Decorate your washroom with decorative towels, fresh flowers and candles. You might want to supply extra pyjamas, a bathrobe and slippers for your guests; these are usually the last things to be packed and most often don't make the cut.

Send them to sleep on a cloud

IKEA

▶ Add a layer of comfort with the Sultan Torod Pillowtop, starting at $199, Ikea.

If you don't have an extra bedroom or pull-out sofa, a quality blow up mattress on the floor can create a comfy nest for your guests. The modern mattresses are leak-proof, have electric pumps and some come with foldable, lightweight bases to elevate the mattress off the floor. Of course an extra blanket and freshly ironed sheets always create a touch of luxury. My special treat to overnight guests this year is adding extra comfort to a mattress, sofa or air bed with a mattress topper; just a few extra inches of plush comfort will make them feel like they are sleeping in a 5-star hotel!

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CHARLES THE BUTLER

ASKCHARLESTHEBUTLER@METRONEWS.CA

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Dear Charles the Butler, I love to display fresh flowers, but when I receive a bouquet I never know what to do so they last as long as possible. Any suggestions?

Who doesn't love a fresh bouquet of flowers! Here are some very simple rules to help flowers last longer.

1. Always cut the stems — a clean cut with sharp scissors diagonally will help them "drink" water more efficiently.
2. When in a large vase, always use a maximum of one capful of bleach. This will keep the water clear.
3. My mother swears by adding a small baby aspirin to each vase. Although I have never done this myself I have had other butlers tell me the wonders of this trick.
4. Keep the room temperature as cool as possible. If the flowers are going to be in a very warm area of the house, then try to put them in a cooler room at night. The warmth will expire flowers more quickly than anything.
5. Change the water in the vase at least every other day.
6. Remove any dead flowers as they die, so that the stem does not decay in the water, thus affecting the other flowers in the vase.

HAVE A QUESTION? SEND AN EMAIL TO ASKCHARLESTHEBUTLER@METRONEWS.CA

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Cue the crowd-pleasing casseroles

This Crab and Rice casserole is creamy, portable and feeds a crowd of 16 a hearty dinner

Delicious often doesn't cut it during the holidays.

Many of us seem to spend the entire month of December on the move, going from one work or family gathering to another. Which means the food you make for these events needs to feed a crowd and be portable, in addition to tasting great. Enter the holiday casserole!

This multilayer dish takes the flavours of a creamy crab dip (that near ubiquitous offering at holiday gatherings) and turns it into a meal. It serves 16 as a hearty dinner, but can feed many more at a potluck, where diners tend to take smaller portions of each dish.

MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Preparation:

1. Spray a 3 L (13-by-9-inch) baking pan with cooking spray; set aside. In a food processor, pulse together celery, pepper and red onion until finely chopped.
2. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high; add chopped vegetables, garlic, salt and pepper and sauté 3 to 4 minutes or until softened. Stir in corn and rice; then spoon into bottom of prepared baking pan.
3. Crab Layer: In a bowl, stir cream cheese, mayonnaise, milk and seasoning. Gently stir in crab and chives; spoon over rice mixture.
4. Topping: Return skillet to medium heat and add butter until melted; remove from heat. Add panko, paprika and salt; stir until well mixed. Sprinkle evenly over top of crab mixture. Bake in 200 C (400 F) oven 20 minutes or until bubbly. Let rest 5 mins. before serving.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ADAPTED FOR METRO BY EMILY RICHARDS, PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND TV CHEF. FOR MORE VISIT, EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA

Ingredients:

- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium red onion, quartered
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) each salt and black pepper
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 750 ml (3 cups) cooked long-grain white rice

Crab Layer

- 500 g (1 lb) Neufchatel cream cheese, softened
- 250 ml (1 cup) mayonnaise
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) milk
- 10 ml (2 tsp) Old Bay Seasoning
- 1 kg (2 lb) lump crab meat
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) chopped fresh chives or scallions

Topping:

- 45 ml (3 tbsp) butter
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) panko breadcrumbs
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) paprika
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) salt

Weekly Cookbook

Crystal Cook and Sandy Pollock, the casserole Queens, have built their business around revamping the ultimate quick-fix dinners for modern tastes.

In The Casserole Queens Cookbook (Potter, 2011), they share updated recipes for traditional dishes such as chicken potpie, shrimp and grits, stuffed peppers, tuna noodle casserole, ham and cheese skillet casserole, and more.

The Queens also provide expert tips, advice on scaling and freezing casseroles, 16 pages of photos and more.

Artichoke and Gorgonzola Casserole makes this a delicious, elegant yet simple dish – perfect for dinner parties

THE CANADIAN PRESS H/O

▶ This recipe makes six to eight servings.

With the busy holiday season upon us, it is handy to have a simple but elegant dish ready to serve family and guests.

Using canned artichokes is a convenient and easy way to add a new vegetable idea to your repertoire and a new side dish for the holiday table this year.

You can find canned artichokes easily in any grocery aisle of canned goods.

Preparation:

1. In large non-stick skillet, melt butter over medium-high heat and cook peppers, onion, garlic, parsley and Italian seasoning, stirring frequently, for about 8 minutes or until tender crisp and becoming golden. Scrape into a shallow 2.5-l (10-cup) casserole dish. Stir in artichokes; set aside.
2. In same skillet, whisk together cream and flour. Add cheese and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Whisk until Gorgonzola cheese is melted and stir in pepper. Pour over vegetable mixture.
3. Topping: In a small bowl, combine breadcrumbs, parsley and butter. Sprinkle over vegetables and bake in 200 C (400 F) oven for about 20 minutes or until bubbly and topping is golden. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/ DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA (ANYDAYMAGIC.CA)/ ADAPTED BY EMILY RICHARDS

Make ahead

Store it

Cover and refrigerate unbaked casserole for up to 1 day. Cover with foil and bake in a 180 C (350 F) oven for about 30 minutes, uncover and bake for about 10 minutes or until golden and bubbly.

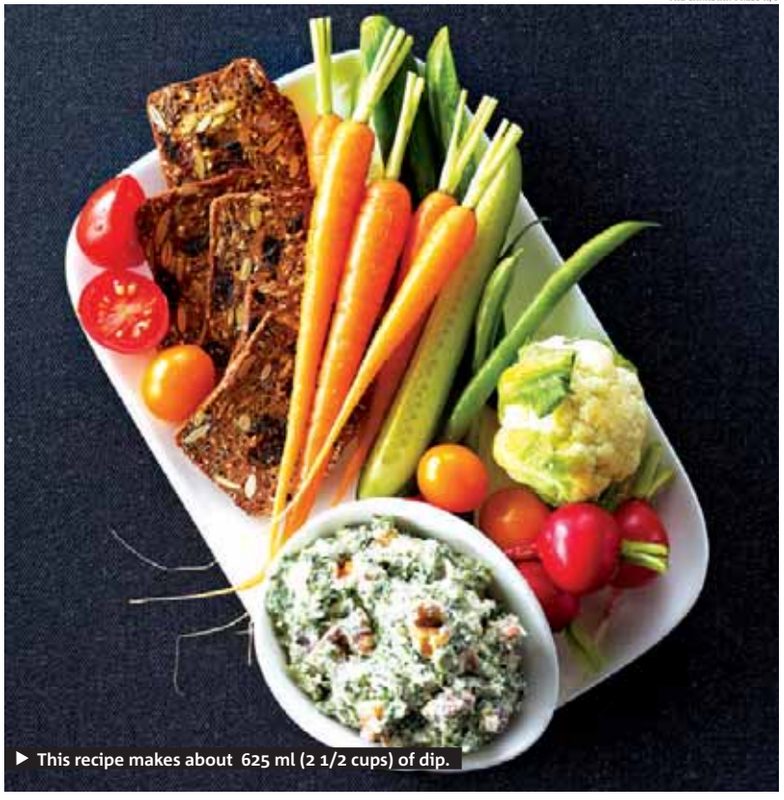
Ingredients:

- 15 ml (1 tbsp) butter
- 2 red bell peppers, sliced
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 5 ml (1 tsp) dried Italian herb seasoning
- 2 cans (each 398 ml/14 oz) whole artichokes, drained and halved
- 250 ml (1 cup) 18 % table cream
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) all-purpose flour
- 90 g (3 oz) Gorgonzola cheese, cut into small pieces
- Pinch freshly ground black pepper

Topping

- 250 ml (1 cup) fresh breadcrumbs
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) butter, melted

THE CANADIAN PRESS H/O



▶ This recipe makes about 625 ml (2 1/2 cups) of dip.

Dip into a perfect-for-the-holidays snack

You can feel good about serving this creamy Walnut Spinach Dip at your next get-together It's rich in iron

Stick to a healthy eating regimen even during the holidays with iron-rich walnut spinach dip made with low-fat yogurt, crumbled walnuts and chopped spinach.

Serve it with freshly cut vegetables and whole-grain crackers for a filling snack or as an eye-catching appetizer.

You can also use the dip as a garnish on baked or roasted potatoes or as a spread on turkey or chicken sandwiches.

Preparation:

1 In a bowl, stir together spinach, cottage cheese, walnuts, yogurt, dill, soy sauce, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, celery salt, hot sauce, onion and garlic powder until well combined. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/ CALIFORNIA WALNUTS, WALNUTINFO.COM/ ADAPTED BY EMILY RICHARDS (PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND A TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA.)

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg (300 g) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained
- 250 ml (1 cup) pressed cottage cheese
- 250 ml (1 cup) walnut pieces, toasted
- 150 ml (2/3 cup) low-fat yogurt
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) freshly chopped dill
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) soy sauce
- 10 ml (2 tsp) Dijon mustard
- 5 ml (1 tsp) Worcestershire sauce
- 5 ml (1 tsp) celery salt
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) hot sauce
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) each onion and garlic powder
- Salt and pepper

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Cups aren't won with fists

THE HOCKEY NEWS

EDWARD FRASER
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

A lot was made over the summer about the Canucks' toughness, or lack thereof, since they lost in the Stanley Cup seven months ago.

No one was protecting the stars, the theme seemed to go, and therefore they weren't able to produce. The lasting image of the defeat, after all, isn't a goal or save, rather it's of uber-pest Brad Marchand relentlessly "gloving" a passive (helpless?) Daniel Sedin.

The worries bled into this year when GM Mike Gillis did little over the summer to add grit and the club got off to a wonky start in October. In fact, there were as many cries among the masses for fisticuffs as there were over the special teams and goaltending woes.

All of this is, of course, utter phooey.

(Which makes it all the more surprising the ping of fear that rang across the West Coast when Aaron Volpatti, the team leader in tilts with five, went down with a shoulder injury. Good thing the team has a Volpatti clone in Viktor Oreskovich at the ready. Whew.)

Whether you believe in the continued effectiveness of "The Code" or not, Vancouver is in good stead. The team does not employ a classic tough guy, but still sits third in the NHL in penalty minutes per game (14.4) and fights (17, according to hockeyfights.com).

(And looking back at the 2011 Cup final, the toughness angle doesn't hold water. Scoring dried up because Ryan Kesler was battling injures, leaving all the pressure on the Sedins, who ran dry/were shut down by Zdeno Chara and Co.)

But this year's Canucks aren't a beat-'em-in-the-alley group by a long shot. Through these eyes, Gillis has built an NHL roster the way it should be done: with a focus on skill, not skull-rattling. With the exception of the 'Fighty Ducks' in 2007 and the 'Big Bad Bruins' in 2011, no Cup winner has placed in the NHL's top half of PIM per game in the regular season and in three of the four remaining champs sat in the bottom five.

Lies, damn lies and statistics, I know, but for further example: The most consistent winning team since the lockout — the Red Wings — have averaged the third least PIM each year in that span.

Bloody knuckles and sore shoulders are not a pre-requisite for success.

RICH LAM/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Victor Oreskovich mixes it up with Colorado's Shane O'Brien on Tuesday.

Luongo travels

Roberto Luongo might get a chance to play against his hometown team after all.

▶ A Vancouver Canucks spokeswoman confirmed the goaltender made the trip to Montreal ahead of tonight's game against the Canadiens.

▶ Luongo was sidelined after taking a Gabriel Landeskog shot in the throat in Tuesday's 6-0 victory over the Colorado Avalanche.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB buzz still centred around Marlins

Albert Pujols will get a huge contract, there's no doubt. But the team that will sign the three-time NL MVP remains unclear.

Will it be St. Louis, the team he's helped to two World Series titles?

The new-look Miami Marlins, whose newfound riches from their new ballpark are dominating the free-agent market?

The Los Angeles Angels, until now in the background?

Miami was the talk of the winter meetings in Dallas yesterday, with teams wondering how close they were to an agreement with Pujols on a deal that could be worth $200 million US or more over 10 years.

$58M The Miami Marlins plucked another free agent prize yesterday, reaching a deal with four-time all-star pitcher Mark Buehrle for $58 million US over four years.

St. Louis said it made a new offer Tuesday to keep Pujols. Agents said they had heard the Angels were bidding, too. Big spenders such as the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox were reduced to spectators.

"They have a new stadium. They're excited about it, and it's good for baseball," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said of the Marlins. "Our roster is pretty set."

Shortstop Jose Reyes' $106-million, six-year contract was finalized yesterday, a deal that pays him $10 million in each of the next two seasons, $16 million in 2014 and $22 million in each of the final three years. Miami has $22 million option for 2018 with a $4 million buyout.

"It's a perfect situation in Miami," Reyes said. "We have a lot of talent there and the new stadium ... close to Dominican, a lot of Spanish people there, so I think I'm going to like it and enjoy it as much as I can." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LM OTERO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ New Marlins shortstop Jose Reyes puts on a team cap yesterday in Dallas.

4 sports

Canucks preview

Vancouver at Montreal
4:30 p.m.
TV: SNET

Vancouver (16-10-1) heads east to play the Canadiens (11-11-6), who have one win in their last six games. Max Pacioretty, Montreal's leading goal-scorer, returned from a three-game suspension on Tuesday but was ineffective in a 3-2 shootout loss to Columbus. Scott Gomez (groin) missed his sixth straight game and Andrei Markov (knee surgery) won't be back before the new year, meaning the Canadiens will need continued production from young players like Pacioretty and David Desharnais, who has 16 points this season.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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EASTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Pittsburgh	28	16	8	2	2	86	69	36	8-2-2-0	8-6-0-2	5-4-1-0	L1
d-Boston	26	17	8	0	1	89	54	35	10-5-0-1	7-3-0-0	8-1-0-1	L1
d-Florida	27	15	8	1	3	78	69	34	6-2-1-3	9-6-0-0	6-3-1-0	W2
Philadelphia	26	16	7	2	1	93	77	35	6-4-1-1	10-3-1-0	7-3-0-0	W3
NY Rangers	24	15	6	1	2	71	55	33	7-2-0-1	8-4-1-1	7-3-0-0	L1
Toronto	28	15	10	2	1	89	90	33	6-4-2-1	9-6-0-0	5-4-1-0	L1
Buffalo	27	14	11	1	1	76	74	30	6-8-1-1	8-3-0-0	3-5-1-1	L1
Washington	27	14	12	0	1	84	87	29	9-4-0-1	5-8-0-0	4-6-0-0	W1
Ottawa	28	13	12	2	1	86	96	29	7-5-0-1	6-7-2-0	5-3-2-0	L1
Winnipeg	27	12	11	3	1	77	83	28	8-4-0-0	4-7-3-1	7-2-1-0	W3
Montreal	28	11	11	2	4	69	72	28	4-5-2-3	7-6-0-1	2-4-2-2	L1
New Jersey	26	13	12	0	1	65	74	27	5-4-0-1	8-8-0-0	5-5-0-0	W1
Tampa Bay	27	11	14	0	2	70	89	24	7-4-0-0	4-10-0-2	3-7-0-0	L5
NY Islanders	25	9	11	3	2	57	79	23	6-6-2-0	3-5-1-2	5-3-1-1	W2
Carolina	30	9	17	2	2	77	104	22	5-9-0-2	4-8-2-0	3-7-0-0	W1

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Minnesota	28	18	7	2	1	71	61	39	10-4-1-0	8-3-1-1	9-1-0-0	W5
d-Chicago	28	16	8	1	3	93	88	36	8-2-0-3	8-6-1-0	5-4-0-1	L1
d-Phoenix	27	15	9	1	2	74	67	33	6-5-1-1	9-4-0-1	6-4-0-0	W2
Detroit	26	16	9	1	0	77	59	33	10-2-1-0	6-7-0-0	7-3-0-0	L2
Vancouver	27	16	10	0	1	89	67	33	8-4-0-1	8-6-0-0	8-2-0-0	W2
St. Louis	27	15	9	0	3	66	60	33	9-3-0-1	6-6-0-2	6-2-0-2	W1
Dallas	26	15	10	0	1	69	72	31	9-4-0-1	6-6-0-0	4-5-0-1	L1
Los Angeles	27	13	10	2	2	62	61	30	8-7-0-1	5-3-2-1	5-4-1-0	L2
San Jose	24	14	9	1	0	68	58	29	7-6-1-0	7-3-0-0	5-5-0-0	L2
Edmonton	28	13	12	0	3	79	76	29	8-5-0-2	5-7-0-1	4-5-0-1	L2
Nashville	27	12	11	3	1	70	74	28	4-5-2-1	8-6-1-0	3-6-1-0	L2
Colorado	28	13	14	1	0	75	84	27	7-9-0-0	6-5-1-0	5-5-0-0	L1
Calgary	27	12	13	1	1	67	78	26	6-5-1-1	6-8-0-0	5-4-0-1	W1
Anaheim	27	8	14	2	3	63	88	21	6-9-1-0	2-5-1-3	2-6-1-1	W1
Columbus	27	8	16	0	3	65	90	19	5-7-0-1	3-9-0-2	5-5-0-0	W1

d — division leaders ranked 1-2-3 regardless of points; a team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OTL (overtime loss) or SL (shootout loss) column.

Last night's results
Washington 5 Ottawa 3
Carolina 5 Edmonton 3
Philadelphia 5 Buffalo 4 (OT)
Tuesday's results
New Jersey 3 Toronto 2 (OT)
Vancouver 6 Colorado 0
Winnipeg 2 Boston 1
Calgary 7 Carolina 6
Columbus 3 Montreal 2 (SO)
St. Louis 3 Detroit 2
Anaheim 3 Los Angeles 2
Minnesota 2 San Jose 1
N.Y. Islanders 5 Tampa Bay 1
Phoenix 3 Nashville 2
Tonight's games
All times Eastern
Florida at Boston, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Chicago at N.Y. Islanders, 7 p.m.
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Nashville at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Vancouver at Montreal, 7:30 p.m.
Phoenix at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
Anaheim at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Colorado at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Minnesota at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.
Dallas at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.
Tomorrow's games
Toronto at Washington, 7 p.m.
Florida at Buffalo, 7:30 p.m.
Carolina at Winnipeg, 8:30 p.m.
Colorado at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.

HURRICANES 5, OILERS 3

First Period
1. Edmonton, Belanger 1 (Paajarvi, Sutton) 10:33
2. Carolina, Skinner 12, 19:23 (pp)
Penalty — Hemsky Edm (hooking) 18:36.
Second Period
3. Carolina, McBain 3 (Kaberle, Faulk) 4:36 (pp)
4. Carolina, Dwyer 4 (Staal, Kaberle) 11:47
5. Carolina, LaRose 8 (Allen) 15:41 (sh)
6. Edmonton, Eager 1 (Petrell, Lander) 15:50
Penalties — Petrell Edm (hooking) 2:59, Sutton Edm (boarding) 4:36, Staal Car (unsportsmanlike conduct) 8:41, Peckham Edm (misconduct) 11:47, Ponikarovsky Car (tripping) 13:49.
Third Period
7. Carolina, Ruutu 9 (Jokinen, Gleason) 3:43
8. Edmonton, Nugent-Hopkins 13 (Gagner, Eberle) 13:21
Missed penalty shot — Skinner Car, 7:19 third.
Penalties — Stewart Car, Smid Edm (roughing) 4:55, Allen Car (roughing) 7:30, Sutton Edm (boarding), Eager Edm (charging) 10:27, Gilbert Edm (slashing) 13:48, Gleason Car (instigating, fighting, game misconduct), Sutton Edm (fighting) 17:51.
Shots on goal

Carolina	10	9	14	—33
Edmonton	7	10	8	—25

Goal — Carolina: Ward (W,9-12-3); Edmonton: Dubnyk (L,4-6-0).
Power plays (goals-chances) — Carolina: 2-6; Edmonton: 0-4.
Referees — Chris Lee, Brian Pochmara. **Linesmen** — Michel Cormier, Brian Mach.
Attendance — 16,839 (16,839) at Edmonton.

CAPITALS 5, SENATORS 3

First Period — No Scoring.
Penalties — Brouwer Wash, Winchester Ott (fighting) 5:39, Backstrom Wash (hooking) 9:23, Anderson Ott (tripping; served by Greening) 11:10, Gonchar Ott (interference) 11:10.
Second Period
1. Washington, Halpern 2 (Wideman, Brouwer) 2:12
2. Ottawa, Condra, 4 (Karlsson, Smith) 12:43
3. Ottawa, Foligno 9 (Gonchar) 17:54
Penalties — Neil Ott (unsportsmanlike conduct) 8:12, Washington bench (too many men; served by Perreault) 14:42, Chimera Wash (hooking) 15:51.
Third Period
4. Washington, Backstrom 10 (Laich, Carlson) 9:45 (pp)
5. Washington, Ovechkin 9 (Backstrom, Orlov) 13:50
6. Washington, Brouwer 8 (Johansson, Carlson) 14:05
7. Ottawa, Michalek 17 (Greening) 16:08 (pp)
8. Washington, Carlson 5 (unassisted) 19:14 (en)
Penalties — Ward Wash (slashing) 0:34, Karlsson Ott (tripping) 8:46, Laich Wash, Foligno Ott (roughing) 13:12, Semin Wash (hooking) 16:03, Ward Wash (slashing) 17:02.
Shots on goal

Washington	15	12	17	—44
Ottawa	6	14	14	—34

Goal — Washington: Vokoun (W,11-7-0); Ottawa: Anderson (L,12-9-2). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Wash: 1-4; Ott: 1-6.
Attendance — 17,771 (19,153) at Ottawa.

LATE TUESDAY

CANUCKS 6, AVALANCHE 0

First Period
1. Vancouver, D.Sedin 10 (Burrows, H.Sedin) 3:19
Penalties — Porter Col (kneeing major, game misconduct) 10:55, Kesler Vcr (goaltender interference) 17:23.
Second Period
2. Vancouver, Hansen 8 (Bieksa, Hodgson) 6:53
Penalties — Edler Vcr (holding) 11:49, Hamhuis Vcr (boarding) 13:05, Galiardi Col (tripping) 17:05.
Third Period
3. Vancouver, D.Sedin 11 (H.Sedin, Hamhuis) 5:15
4. Vancouver, Hansen 9 (Edler, Ballard) 5:49
5. Vancouver, D.Sedin 12 (Burrows, H.Sedin) 7:08
6. Vancouver, Edler 4 (Hodgson, Schneider) 9:40 (pp)
Penalties — McClement Col (holding the stick) 2:46, Quincey Col, Burrows Vcr (roughing) 4:51, Quincey Col (double roughing), Lapierre Vcr (roughing), Weise Vcr (misconduct) 8:27, Bieksa Vcr (roughing) 11:12, Landeskog Col (high-sticking) 11:59, O'Brien Col (fighting), Kobasew Col (misconduct), Oreskovich Vcr (fighting, holding), Lapierre Vcr (misconduct) 14:46.
Shots on goal

Colorado	12	11	10	—33
Vancouver	6	6	11	—23

Goal (shots-saves) — Colorado: Varlamov (L,9-11-1)(21-15), Giguere (9:40 third; 2-2); Vancouver: Luongo (W,9-6-1) (13-13), Schneider (3:48 second; 20-20). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Colorado: 0-5; Vancouver: 1-5.
Attendance — 18,860 (18,860) at Vancouver.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	PT
Kessel, Tor	17	18	35
D.Sedin, Vcr	12	21	33
Toews, Chi	17	15	32
Giroux, Pha	15	17	32

Last night's games not included

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	3	0	.750	362	247
N.Y. Jets	7	5	0	.583	290	260
Buffalo	5	7	0	.417	278	304
Miami	4	8	0	.333	246	220
SOUTH	**W**	**L**	**T**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**
Houston	9	3	0	.750	310	189
Tennessee	7	5	0	.583	249	229
Jacksonville	3	9	0	.250	152	238
Indianapolis	0	12	0	.000	174	358
NORTH	**W**	**L**	**T**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**
Baltimore	9	3	0	.750	296	192
Pittsburgh	9	3	0	.750	268	195
Cincinnati	7	5	0	.583	266	250
Cleveland	4	8	0	.333	175	240
WEST	**W**	**L**	**T**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**
Denver	7	5	0	.583	256	292
Oakland	7	5	0	.583	274	308
San Diego	5	7	0	.417	287	289
Kansas City	5	7	0	.417	163	268

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	7	5	0	.583	283	244
N.Y. Giants	6	6	0	.500	287	315
Philadelphia	4	8	0	.333	271	282
Washington	4	8	0	.333	202	256
SOUTH	**W**	**L**	**T**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**
New Orleans	9	3	0	.750	393	269
Atlanta	7	5	0	.583	269	244
Carolina	4	8	0	.333	290	324
Tampa Bay	4	8	0	.333	218	329
NORTH	**W**	**L**	**T**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**
y-Green Bay	12	0	0	1.000	420	262
Detroit	7	5	0	.583	333	277
Chicago	7	5	0	.583	291	242
Minnesota	2	10	0	.167	246	330
WEST	**W**	**L**	**T**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**
y-San Francisco	10	2	0	.833	288	161
Seattle	5	7	0	.417	216	246
Arizona	5	7	0	.417	232	269
St. Louis	2	10	0	.167	140	296

y-clinched division

WEEK 14
Tonight's game
All times Eastern
Cleveland at Pittsburgh, 8:20 p.m.
Sunday's games
New Orleans at Tennessee, 1 p.m.
Indianapolis at Baltimore, 1 p.m.
Kansas City at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.
Minnesota at Detroit, 1 p.m.
Houston at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.
Atlanta at Carolina, 1 p.m.
Philadelphia at Miami, 1 p.m.
New England at Washington, 1 p.m.
San Francisco at Arizona, 4:05 p.m.
Chicago at Denver, 4:05 p.m.
Buffalo at San Diego, 4:15 p.m.
Oakland at Green Bay, 4:15 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Dallas, 8:20 p.m.
Monday's game
St. Louis at Seattle, 8:30 p.m.

SOCCER

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

(Home teams listed first; x — advances)

FIRST ROUND

GROUP A

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
x-Bayern Munich	6	4	1	1	11	6	13
x-Napoli	6	3	2	1	10	6	11
Manchester City	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
Villarreal	6	0	0	6	2	14	0

Yesterday's results
Manchester City (Eng.) 2 Bayern Munich (Ger.) 0
Villarreal (Spain) 0 Napoli (Italy) 2

GROUP B

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
x-Inter Milan	6	3	1	1	7	5	10
x-CSKA Moscow	6	2	2	2	9	8	7
Trabzonspor	6	1	4	1	3	5	7
Lille	6	1	3	2	6	6	6

Yesterday's results
Lille (France) 0 Trabzonspor (Turkey) 0
Inter Milan (Italy) 1 CSKA Moscow (Russia) 2

GROUP C

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
x-Benfica	6	3	3	0	8	4	12
x-FC Basel	6	3	2	1	11	10	11
Manchester United	6	2	3	1	11	8	9
Otelul Galati	6	0	0	6	3	11	0

x-advances
Yesterday's results
FC Basel (Switz.) 2 Manchester United (Eng.) 1
Benfica (Port.) 1 Otelul Galati (Romania) 0

GROUP D

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
x-Real Madrid	6	6	0	0	19	2	18
x-Lyon	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Ajax	6	2	2	2	6	6	8
Dinamo Zagreb	6	0	0	6	3	22	0

Yesterday's results
Dinamo Zagreb (Croatia) 1 Lyon (France) 7
Ajax (Netherlands) 0 Real Madrid (Spain) 3

GROUP E

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
x-Chelsea	6	3	2	1	13	4	11
x-Bayer Leverkusen	6	3	1	2	8	8	10
Valencia	6	2	2	2	12	7	8
Genk	6	0	3	3	2	16	3

Tuesday's results
Chelsea (England) 3 Valencia (Spain) 0
Genk (Belg.) 1 Bayer Leverkusen (Germany) 1

GROUP F

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
x-Arsenal	6	3	2	1	7	6	11
x-Marseille	6	3	1	2	7	4	10
Olympiakos	6	3	0	3	8	6	9
Borussia Dortmund	6	1	1	4	6	12	4

Tuesday's results
Olympiakos (Greece) 3 Arsenal (England) 1
Borussia Dortmund (Ger.) 2 Marseille (Fra.) 3

GROUP G

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
x-APOEL	6	2	3	1	6	6	9
Zenit St. Petersburg	6	2	3	1	7	5	9
FC Porto	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Shakhtar Donetsk	6	1	2	3	6	8	5

Tuesday's results
FC Porto (Port.) 0 Zenit St. Petersburg (Ukr.) 0
APOEL (Cyprus) 0 Shakhtar Donetsk (Rus.) 2

GROUP H

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
x-Barcelona	6	5	1	0	20	4	16
x-AC Milan	6	2	3	1	11	8	9
Viktoria Plzen	6	1	2	3	4	11	5
BATE Borisov	6	0	2	4	2	14	2

Tuesday's results
Barcelona (Spain) 4 BATE Borisov (Belarus) 0
Viktoria Plzen (Czech) 2 AC Milan (Italy) 2

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

AMERICAN LEAGUE

BALTIMORE ORIOLES—Named DeMarlo Hale third base coach and Bill Castro bullpen coach.
MINNESOTA TWINS—Agreed to terms with RHP Matt Capps on a one-year contract.
TAMPA BAY RAYS—Announced the retirement of special assistant Andres Reiner.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

COLORADO ROCKIES—Traded RHP Huston Street and cash to the San Diego for a player to be named and cash.
MIAMI MARLINS—Agreed to terms with SS Jose Reyes on 6-yr contract & LHP Mark Buehrle.
PITTSBURGH PIRATES—Agreed to terms with LHP Erik Bedard & OF Nate McLouth on 1-yr contracts. Agreed to terms with C Jose Morales on minor league contract. Designated C Jason Jaramillo & INF Pedro Ciriaco for assignment.
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS—Acquired OF Angel Pagan and a player to be named or cash from the New York Mets RHP Ramon Ramirez and OF Andres Torres.

FOOTBALL

CFL

EDMONTON ESKIMOS—Signed DB Delroy Clarke and RB/KR Hugh Charles.

NFL

CINCINNATI BENGALS—Placed DT Pat Sims on injured reserve. Signed DT Nick Hayden. Released DT Cornell Banks from the practice squad. Signed DT Swanson Miller to the practice squad.
GREEN BAY PACKERS—Signed QB Graham Harrell from the practice squad. Placed TE Andrew Quarless on injured reserve. Signed G Jake Vermiglio to the practice squad.
HOUSTON TEXANS—Signed QB Jeff Garcia and P Matt Turk.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS—Signed WR Dorin Dickerson to the practice squad.
NEW YORK GIANTS—Placed OT Stacy Andrews on injured reserve. Signed OL Tony Ugoh. Terminated the practice squad contract of QB Ryan Perrilloux. Re-signed OL Selvish Capers to the practice squad.
OAKLAND RAIDERS—Signed RB Lonyae Miller & LB Carl Ihenacho to practice squad.
ST. LOUIS RAMS—Signed CB Chris Smith from the practice squad. Released CB Nate Ness. Signed RB Chase Reynolds and QB Matt Gutierrez to the practice squad.
SAN DIEGO CHARGERS—Placed DE Luis Castillo on injured reserve. Signed LB Nate Triplett to a two-year contract. Signed DE Damik Scafe to the practice squad.

HOCKEY

NHL

LEAGUE OFFICE—Suspended Dallas D Mark Fistric, without pay, for 3 games for charging N.Y. Islanders F Nino Niederreiter during Dec. game.
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS—Named Craig Patrick senior advisor of hockey operations.
FLORIDA PANTHERS—Acquired F Krys Barch & 2012 6th-round draft pick from Dallas for F Jake Hauswirth & 2012 5th-round draft pick. Assigned F Bracken Kearns to San Antonio (AHL).
ST. LOUIS BLUES—Assigned F Evgeny Grachev to Peoria (AHL).

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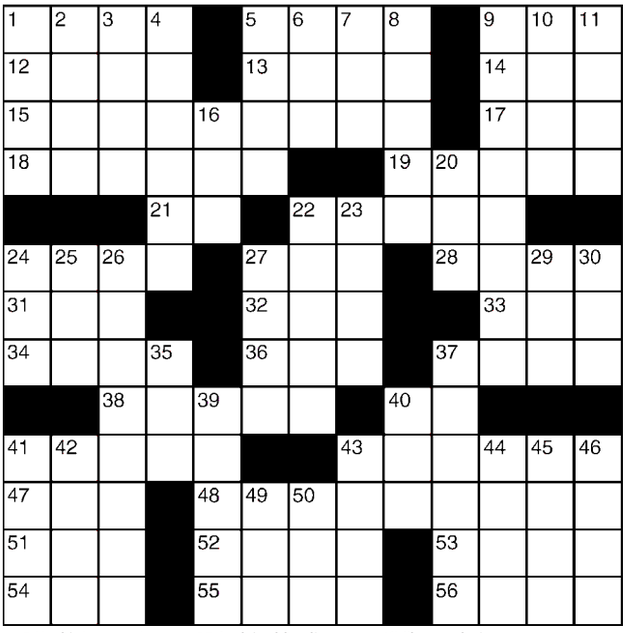
Crossword



Across
1 Get well
5 Start over
9 Dandy
12 Pelvic bones
13 On
14 "I — Camera"
15 Mask
17 Back talk
18 Advertising section
19 Selassie worshipper
21 B&O, for ex.
22 Dodge
24 — and crafts
27 Hearty brew
28 Sandwich treat
31 Round Table address
32 60 sec.
33 Mischievous tyke
34 First course, often
36 Peculiar
37 Touch
38 Obliterate
40 Yours truly
41 Earring locations
43 Random drawing?
47 Lubricate
48 HBO's vampire series
51 Wilde-beest
52 Greek vowel
53 Radius neighbor
54 — out a living
55 Coral structure
56 Appear

Down
1 Stereo setup
2 Verve
3 Has a bug
4 "Star Wars" weaponry
5 Huck's transport
6 Schedule abbr.
7 Elmer, to Bugs
8 "Tosca," e.g.
9 It barely connects to the sternum
10 Leave out
11 One of the Three Bears
16 Mess up
20 Commotion
22 Skip a phoneme
23 Sell
24 Fool
25 Carnival city
26 Loyal to the end
27 Andy's old radio pal
29 Ostrich's kin
30 Make up your mind
35 Opposite of "post-"
37 Greek god of the winds
39 Moving about
40 Flash —
41 Theater box
42 Sty cry
43 Unwilling to listen
44 Apportion (out)
45 Unrivaled
46 Cheese choice
49 Shad product
50 Salt Lake athlete

▶ Yesterday's answer

N	A	S	A	■	A	F	T	■	T	R	A	M
A	L	A	R	■	M	O	O	■	E	E	L	Y
R	E	C	O	V	E	R	Y	■	A	C	T	S
Y	E	S	M	E	N	■	E	N	R	O	O	T
■	■	■	A	I	D	■	D	O	O	R	■	■
A	I	R	■	L	E	T	■	R	O	D	E	O
T	R	E	K	■	D	U	D	■	M	E	G	A
T	A	C	I	T	■	B	E	T	■	R	O	T
■	■	O	D	E	S	■	F	A	A	■	■	■
J	O	U	N	C	E	■	A	C	T	I	V	E
O	K	R	A	■	R	E	C	O	I	L	E	D
W	A	S	P	■	V	A	T	■	L	I	N	G
L	Y	E	S	■	O	R	O	■	T	A	T	E

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Today's horoscope

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 Do something meaningful today, something that makes a difference in your corner of the world.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 You may be eager to push ahead with a new plan or project but wait until Saturday's eclipse has passed.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 The straightest route to your destination may not be the best one.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 You could come into a sum of money today, and it's just as possible that you could lose it. Either way, don't take material things too seriously.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 What happens today will at first look like a challenge and then like an opportunity. Get competitive.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 Stay calm, be patient and don't try to force the pace over the next 24 hours. You may have to wait for those who think slowly to catch up.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 If you upset someone in a position of power, make sure you apologize.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 There is no point getting worked up if a colleague does a poor job of what he or she is working on.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 Bide your time today. Let others make the first move. Nothing is so urgent that it must be done now.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Try not to get caught up in the hysteria that seems to be making the rounds at the moment. Stay calm.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 A little bit of modesty will go a long way over the next 24 hours.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20. You may be tempted to cut corners and hope that no one notices. They most likely will, leading to embarrassment. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Sudoku

	9		8		2		6	
		4	5		7	1		
8								4
		7		1		6		
5								8
		8		6		9		
1								5
		6	3		4	2		
	5		2		1		7	

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

1	3	6	5	4	7	8	2	9
9	2	4	3	8	6	5	1	7
8	7	5	9	2	1	6	3	4
6	5	3	2	9	4	7	8	1
2	4	1	7	6	8	3	9	5
7	9	8	1	5	3	2	4	6
5	1	7	8	3	9	4	6	2
4	8	2	6	1	5	9	7	3
3	6	9	4	7	2	1	5	8

Send a KISS

You can now post your kiss, and read even more kisses, at metronews.ca/kiss.

Muffin, I love you with all my heart,even more when we are apart. I want you to know that from the very start of my day until I close my eyes at night you are who I think about! You are my true soul mate, and I think it was fate that we met 10 yrs ago, and it's love,respect,communication and our friendship that has kept us together. I hope we can spend the rest of our lives in each others arms. I Love you Xoxo **PIE**

can't eat, Maybe my life would be complete if you let me spend it with you from making up my mind! Sent you a message. look. Sweetly caring! Secret wish for you to show up at my door. Hold me, please and thank you. Totally understand, if nothing comes of this. I am strong been thru enough to not let negatives get me down. **CAN'T SLEEP**

Today 5°/0° Sunny
Friday 6°/1° Sunny
Know what the weather will be 14 days from now.
Check the 14 day trend.
TWN incorporates MSC data

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THANASSIS STAVRAKIS/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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$999.00

14kt white gold plain style bezel holding Chinese gold panda coin
$320.00 + current coin price

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$429.00

10kt white gold pendant with blue sapphires
$225.00

18kt yellow gold ring with 15 diamonds set in white gold (0.30 cttw VS/G-I), 12.74 grams
$1,059.00

Mens' blue cabochon-cut star sapphire (12.30 ct) ring, with 6 square sapphires, 28.38 grams
$9,000.00

10kt gold tri-colour butterfly necklace with a cable-link chain, 5.21 grams
$289.00

18kt white gold bracelet with diamonds (1.75 cttw SI/GH), 10.01 grams
$2,979.00

Ladies' gold solitaire ring with round, brilliant-cut diamond (2.14 ct, VS_2/J) in Tiffany-style shank
$19,000.00

18kt yellow gold bracelet with 108 diamonds (3.78 cttw, VS/G-H), 67.04 grams
$7,599.00

Silver ruby ring, 13.7 grams
$99.00

14kt white gold earrings with (4 mm) blue sapphires, 4.43 grams
$196.00

14kt white gold ring with brown diamonds in centre and white diamonds on band (0.42 cttw SI_2-I/GH)
$999.00

2-strand 15"/16" cultured pearl (6.5-6.5 mm ea.) necklace with 14kt white gold and diamond clasp
$11,000.00

14kt white gold with princess-cut diamonds matching pendant and earrings (0.83 cttw VS/F-H)
$918.00

Silver and synthetic ruby earring and pendant set with snake-style chain, 6.58 grams
$30.00

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